



Reading and Remembrance 2009: Medals and Memories

By Angie Littlefield

Started in *The Year of the Veteran*, the Canadian web-based project *Reading and Remembrance* delivers one-stop shopping for educators looking for reading and arts-based materials for Remembrance Day. Over 100,000 students participated in four years and an astronomical number of visitors downloaded data.

Started as a collaborative project by the Durham West Arts Centre in 2005, *Reading and Remembrance* continues to draw new partners. In 2009 the Ontario Library Association and the Ontario Historical Society joined founding sponsor Ontario Power Generation to promote the project provincially.

Angie Littlefield, Project Manager notes, "*Reading and Remembrance* has been mentioned in federal parliament and twice had the involvement of Ontario's Lieutenant Governor; we've reached into schools in every corner of the province. Because teachers tell us how excited students are to learn new facets of what Canadians should be proud to remember, we want to spread the magic further. Each year we search out stories that personalize Remembrance for young people."

Educators may select materials from four archived themes—*In Flanders Fields*; *Anti-Racism and Holocaust Education*; *Women and War* and *Art of Dissent*. * Research is underway for 10 totally bilingual lessons for the 2009 theme: *Medals and Memories*.

Some of the 2009 lessons include Victoria Cross recipients; diversity in service from First Nations to new Canadians; animals awarded the Dickin Medal; Canada's decorated female combatants and the medals and memories of Canada's Cadets and Junior Rangers.

Lessons have pre-reading questions to create readiness, prompts during the reading/viewing to stimulate analysis and post-reading activities to encourage explorations in writing, reading, research and the arts. The site also has stand-alone readings and links to websites that provide Remembrance-related materials for teachers to follow their own lines of research.

The "value added" of the *Reading and Remembrance* site is the handy access to multiple resources in a format friendly to the Ontario curriculum. The lessons go well with *Civics*, *History*, *English*, *Visual Arts* and a wide array of elementary curricula.

Although teachers may download the ready-to-use lessons for Remembrance Day, or to use at any time during the year, the Project Managers ask they sign up for the *Reading and Remembrance* Honour Roll. "A high participation rate ensures continuing support to develop more student-centred resources," says Littlefield, "and we want to do that to promote a greater awareness of the values Remembrance Day represents for school-aged children."

To encourage participation, the website introduces a new interactive feature this year. Young people may submit the profile of a local veteran or current service person and teachers and librarians may submit a lesson.

"We've set an October 2nd deadline as we hope that young people and professionals alike will add to the body of knowledge for this year's theme; we would like to see their research and reading validated through on-line publication", says Project Manager Mary Cook. The website has a submission template.

Shelagh Paterson, Executive Director of the Ontario Library Association states, "Libraries have participated in this project in the past. We want to step forward a little more this year to promote a project that places a high priority on reading, research and community collaboration. There are memories of veterans in all communities served by public libraries and we want to stimulate the search for the reading materials that honour the men and women who created those memories."

Don Terry of Public Affairs, Pickering Nuclear concludes, "This project models excellence in public education. We are proud to be the founding and continuing sponsor of a project that this year will reach even further into Ontario communities to support veterans, reading, history and diversity."

www.readingandremembrance.ca

*As *Reading and Remembrance* is a project in progress, the materials 2005-2009 are not in a standard format. *Art of Dissent*, created for the Holocaust Centre of Toronto, had its own format. The Project Managers for *Reading and Remembrance* welcome input on teacher-friendly formats.

Contact

Angie Littlefield

Angie Littlefield, independent writer and curator with 33 years experience in education, created *Reading and Remembrance* in 2005 while E.D. of the Durham West Arts Centre. Angie curated *The Art of Dissent: Willy Fick* for the Toronto Holocaust Centre (Nov 2008), *Angelika Hoerle: Comet of the Cologne Arts Scene* for the AGO (May 23 to Aug 30, 2009) and wrote and produced *Angelika's Promise* Jackmann Hall, AGO, June 17 and June 24, 2009.

www.angielittlefield.com

angie.littlefield@yahoo.ca

72 Baronial Court, Toronto, ON, M1C 3J7

416-282-0646