



Personal Stories

SIR ARTHUR CURRIE (1875–1933)

By the start of the Hundred Days campaign, Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Currie was a seasoned leader of the Canadian Corps. Currie studied the battlefield, planned methodically, listened to his staff officers and tried to minimize the Corps' casualties while maximizing the enemy's. "I did not care what happened to me but to my men, to their wives, their mothers, their children, and to Canada. I owed a duty which I wanted to fulfill to the very best of my ability."

Despite being recognized as one of the finest generals of the war, many blamed Currie for the unprecedented Canadian casualties sustained during the conflict, particularly during the last assault on Mons. In his final years, Currie successfully won a libel suit regarding his role during the final months of the war. Alongside photographs and other artifacts, the exhibition displays Currie's wool service dress jacket. He was almost two metres tall and weighed more than 110 kilograms.

HENRY NORWEST (1884–1918)

Private Henry Norwest, a soldier of French-Canadian and Cree descent, hailed from Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta. He served three years at the front with the 50th Canadian Infantry Battalion. A skilled sniper and courageous soldier twice awarded the Military Medal, Norwest fought during the battle at Amiens. Nicknamed "Ducky," he was an inspiration to his comrades, who mourned his death in battle on August 18, 1918.

Henry Norwest often crawled into No Man's Land to wait for enemy soldiers to reveal themselves. His comrades claimed that he had killed at least 115 Germans before he was taken out by an enemy sniper. The exhibition displays his Ross Mk. II rifle, lent by the King's Own Calgary Regiment Museum in Calgary, Alberta.

GEORGES VANIER (1888–1967)

Major Georges Philéas Vanier served with the 22nd Battalion, the only infantry unit consisting entirely of French-Canadians. Following two days of bitter fighting at Arras, Vanier led a final assault against German positions near the village of Chérisy on August 28, 1918. His right leg, badly wounded by a shell, had to be amputated.

After the war, Vanier became a career diplomat and was Canada's first French-Canadian Governor General, from 1959 to 1967. The exhibition features photographs of Vanier and a watercolour depicting the 22nd Battalion's Chérisy attack. Vanier is believed to be the officer in the centre, leading his men forward against strong enemy resistance.

LILLIAN ELLEN GALBRAITH (1882–1967)

Nursing Sister Lillian Ellen Galbraith, from Barrie, Ontario, was one of the first nurses to go overseas, serving in hospitals and medical units in Malta, Greece and Britain. Galbraith was one of almost 3,000 Nursing Sisters who cared for the wounded during the war. For her long service from 1915 to 1920, she was awarded the rare distinction of the Royal Red Cross, Class 2 medal.

JOHN MACGREGOR (1889–1952)

A fearless soldier and a born leader, Scottish-Canadian Captain John MacGregor served in the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles. MacGregor earned the Victoria Cross during fierce battles to the west of Cambrai, between September 29 and October 3, 1918. In one clash, although wounded, he singlehandedly attacked a series of machine guns, killing four Germans and capturing eight prisoners.

MacGregor survived and went on to serve in the Second World War, becoming one of Canada's most decorated soldiers. He died in Powell River, British Columbia, on June 9, 1952. **Victory 1918** features his impressive medal set, including the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest and most prestigious medal for gallantry.

GEORGE PRICE (1892–1918)

Private George Price was born in Nova Scotia, conscripted in Saskatchewan, and served with the 28th Canadian Infantry Battalion.

On the morning of November 11, 1918, his battalion advanced to a position east of Mons. At 9 a.m., they received word that all hostilities would end at 11 a.m. While most Canadians took cover in these final hours, Price led a patrol to ensure that the enemy launched no final attacks. A German sniper shot him minutes before the Armistice, making him the last Canadian to be killed on the Western Front.

His British War Medal and the Victory Medal are showcased in the exhibition, alongside a postcard to his sister.

**OCTOBER 26, 2018
TO MARCH 31, 2019**

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Exhibition
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Generously supported by
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With additional support from Dr. John Scott Cowan and the Sir Joseph Flavelle Foundation

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