

# CANADA REMEMBERS TIMES

Veterans' Week Special Edition — 5-11 November 2021



**WEATHER**  
3 July 1958  
Sinai Peninsula  
43°C Sunny

## AT WAR IN THE PERSIAN GULF



Photo: Department of National Defence

A Canadian service woman in the Persian Gulf region in 1991.

One of our country's best known military efforts in more recent decades was the Gulf War. More than 4,000 Canadian Armed Forces members served in the tense Persian Gulf region in 1990-1991 as part of the international coalition of countries that came together to push the occupying troops of Iraq out of neighbouring Kuwait.

Our service members played a variety of important roles, from sailing on three Canadian warships that served with the Coalition fleet, to flying CF-18 jet fighters on attack missions, to operating a military hospital and more. It also marked the first time that Canadian women served in combat roles during a conflict. The active fighting ended on 28 February 1991 when the Coalition forces offered a ceasefire to Iraq. This had followed six weeks of a devastating air campaign, followed by an armoured and infantry offensive that quickly liberated Kuwait.

Fortunately no Canadians were killed in the Gulf War but it took a lasting toll on many of those who were there. Thirty years after the Liberation of Kuwait, we remember the brave Canadians who served.

## Peacekeeping in Egypt

A special milestone in international relations is being observed in 2021. This year marks the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of large-scale United Nations (UN) peacekeeping efforts—the groundbreaking approach to diffusing conflicts by sending in neutral forces to separate the combatants and build peace in troubled regions of the world. Canada has been involved in these kinds of missions from the beginning.

The 1956 Suez Crisis was an armed standoff in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt. The forces of Egypt were on one side and the troops of Israel, Britain and France were on the other. The situation was extremely tense and threatened to draw the world into war, so the UN worked to find a solution. Canada would play a pivotal role, suggesting a new kind of military mission which would have a lasting impact on the way the international community deals with unrest in different corners of the globe.

Lester B. Pearson, Canada's Minister of External Affairs and a future Prime



Photo: Department of National Defence

Canadian peacekeepers on the border of Egypt and Israel in 1962.

Minister, proposed that a multinational force drawn from UN countries (including Canada) would go to Egypt to enforce a cease-fire and oversee the pull out of foreign forces. This idea would have a huge influence on the way the world

responded to conflicts and would help define Canada's international role in the decades that have followed. In recognition for his contributions, Pearson was awarded the 1957 Nobel Peace Prize.

## A tragic day to remember

In most of our country, July 1 is simply known as Canada Day. In Newfoundland and Labrador, however, it has an additional and much more somber meaning. There, it is also known as Memorial Day—a time to remember those who have served and sacrificed in uniform.

On this date in 1916 near the French village of Beaumont-Hamel, some 800 soldiers from the Newfoundland Regiment went into action on the opening day of the Battle of the Somme. They bravely advanced into a thick hail of enemy fire, instinctively tucking their chins down as if they were walking through a

snowstorm. In less than half an hour of fighting, the regiment would be torn apart. The next morning, only 68 were able to answer the roll call. It was a blow that touched almost every community in Newfoundland. 105 years later, the people of the province still solemnly commemorate it with Memorial Day.

The regiment would rebuild after this tragedy and it would later earn the designation "Royal Newfoundland Regiment" for its members' impressive actions during the First World War. Today, the now-peaceful Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial overlooks the

old battlefield and commemorates the Newfoundlanders who served in the conflict, particularly those who have no known grave.



Newfoundland soldiers before their attack at Beaumont-Hamel.

Photo courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL NA-3105)

## Fighting in Hong Kong

The Battle of Hong Kong was Canadian soldiers' first major action during the Second World War. Some 1,975 of our troops—mostly members of Manitoba's Winnipeg Grenadiers and Quebec's Royal Rifles of Canada—set sail from Vancouver in late October 1941. Their mission was to help defend the British Crown Colony in East Asia from the threat of Japanese invasion.

Only weeks after the Canadians arrived after crossing the Pacific Ocean, the enemy attacked Hong Kong on 8 December 1941. The outnumbered Allied defenders fought bravely before finally being forced to surrender on Christmas Day. Approximately 290 Canadians were killed and almost 500 wounded in the heavy fighting. Life for the survivors in Japanese prisoner of war

camp would be incredibly harsh. Over 260 more of our soldiers would lose their lives due to malnutrition, hard labour and physical abuse over the next four years, before finally being liberated when the war ended in August 1945.



Photo: Imperial War Museum KF 193

Canadian soldiers training in the hills of Hong Kong before the invasion.

## HOLDING THE LINE AT KAPYONG

The Battle of Kapyong was a key chapter in Canada's efforts during the Korean War. In the spring of 1951, the 2nd Battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry would see heavy action when enemy forces launched a major attack through the Kapyong River valley. If the enemy succeeded in breaking the United Nations lines, the city of Seoul was in danger of being captured.

The Canadians came under intense fire during the night of 24-25 April 1951 from waves of charging enemy soldiers in the hills above the Kapyong River. At times our troops were completely overrun and the situation so desperate, they even requested their own artillery to fire on their positions to drive off the attackers. The outnumbered Canadians later became surrounded and their ammunition ran low, so they had to get new supplies dropped by air.

During the fight, 10 of our soldiers were killed and 23 wounded, but against all odds, the Princess Pats had maintained their position and held back the enemy. The battalion received the United States Presidential Unit Citation for their brave actions at Kapyong, a rare honour for a non-American military unit.



'Holding at Kapyong' war painting by Ted Zuber.

Image: Beaverbrook Collection of War Art. Canadian War Museum 19900084-001

veterans.gc.ca/educators

## The Golan Heights

Serving far away from home in international peace support missions is very challenging. One of our country's longest-lasting peacekeeping efforts came in the Golan Heights of Syria. Canadian Armed Forces members first deployed there in 1974 as part of a United Nations (UN) mission to help supervise and monitor the ceasefire between Syria and Israel in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War.

Our peacekeepers in the Golan Heights primarily carried out support duties for the UN force, like maintaining vehicles and filling communications and other logistical roles. A large contingent of Canadian peacekeepers served in the Golan Heights for 32 years before most of them were withdrawn in 2006, with a much smaller Canadian presence remaining there for several years after that. In total, more than 12,000 Canadians would serve in the Golan Heights.



Photo: Department of National Defence

A peacekeeper guarding the Canadian base in the Golan Heights in 2002

Peace support efforts can have a high price. In fact, the highest single-day loss of life in our country's history of peacekeeping touched on the mission there. Nine Canadian Armed Forces members with the UN peace force in Egypt were killed on 9 August 1974 when their plane was shot down in a Syrian missile attack while delivering supplies for the Golan Heights. August 9 is now marked each year in Canada as National Peacekeepers' Day.

## Canadians in Afghanistan

Canada's mission in Afghanistan was our country's most high-profile military effort in recent years. More than 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces members served in this far-off country in Southwest Asia from 2001 to 2014 as part of a UN-mandated multinational coalition.

It was very challenging duty in a rugged and harsh environment. Canadian military personnel fulfilled a variety of roles there, from combat operations to contributing to many humanitarian and nation-building efforts. The danger was very real and when our soldiers went outside the relative safety of their bases, the threats of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and other enemy attacks were often present.

It has been 20 years since our country's military mission there began, but the memory of the some 158 Canadian Armed Forces members who died in the effort will endure. The service and sacrifice of all of those who supported our country's mission in Afghanistan has been commemorated in many ways, from the "Highway of Heroes" and community monuments across the country, to a new national memorial that is currently being planned for Ottawa. Canada will remember them.



Photo: Department of National Defence

Canadian Armed Forces members in Afghanistan in 2002.

## The "Black Battalion"

Black Canadians were eager to serve their country during the First World War. In an era when our society was less inclusive, it was difficult for them to enlist in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. 2021 marks the 105<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the No. 2 Construction Battalion in Pictou, Nova Scotia, on 5 July 1916. It was the largest Black unit in Canadian history. While recruitment took place across the country, the majority of the volunteers came from the Maritimes. By the end of the war, some 800 personnel had served in the battalion.

The unit was intended for support roles and served honourably in France attached to the Canadian Forestry Corps. They provided lumber to maintain trenches on the front lines and also helped improve roads and build a railway. After the end of the First World War in November 1918, its members returned to Canada in early 1919 to rejoin civilian life and the unit was officially disbanded in 1920.

Earlier this year, it was announced that the Government of Canada would officially apologize for the discrimination that members of the No. 2 Construction Battalion were forced to overcome in order to join the fight for peace and freedom. Today, their dedicated service is remembered as an important chapter in the long tradition of military service by Black Canadians in our country and the evolution of attitudes in our society.



Image: Library and Archives Canada

A 2016 Canada Post stamp featuring the No. 2 Construction Battalion.

## BATTLING THE PANDEMIC

Image: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Canadians who serve in uniform gain some pretty remarkable skills—ones that are not only useful in the military but in the civilian world as well. During the COVID-19 pandemic, some former and still-serving Canadian Armed Forces members have made impressive contributions in the national response to the great challenges our country has faced. Here are a few of those accomplished individuals.

- Dr. Trevor Jain joined the Canadian Armed Forces reserves while still in high school. He went on to obtain his medical degree and served as a medical officer. His impressive contributions after the Swiss Air disaster off the coast of Nova Scotia in 1998 earned him the Meritorious Service Medal. Dr. Jain developed an interest in disaster medicine, a skill that would be invaluable as an emergency room physician in Prince Edward Island as well as an important leader in the province's response to the pandemic.
- After becoming a family physician, Dr. Jennifer Russell of New Brunswick joined the Canadian Armed Forces and served as a medical officer for 10 years. She gained valuable experience in health systems that focused on preventive medicine and immunization programs. Dr. Russell's training in the military helped position her as the Chief Medical Officer of Health in New Brunswick, taking on the fight against the pandemic.
- Dr. Bonnie Henry is a former member of the Canadian navy. She enlisted as a university student and would go on to serve as a medical officer. This role exposed her to a number of physical and mental stresses but also taught her many lessons about leadership and how to make decisions under pressure. This hard-won experience would help Dr. Henry guide British Columbia through the pandemic as the Provincial Health Officer.



Photo: Department of National Defence

Canadian soldier delivering vaccine supplies to a First Nations community in northern Manitoba in May 2021.

Thanks in part to their special training and military experiences, we have been in experienced hands to battle the pandemic!

## Some Canadian military milestones

22 April  
1915

Canadians see first major action at Ypres

9 April  
1917

Start of the Battle of Vimy Ridge

11 November  
1918

End of the First World War

25 December  
1941

Canadians in Hong Kong forced to surrender

June-August  
1944

Canadians fight in D-Day and the Battle of Normandy

15 August  
1945

Victory over Japan (V-J) Day

FIRST WORLD WAR  
1914-1918

SECOND WORLD WAR  
1939-1945

1 July  
1916

Start of the Battles of the Somme and Beaumont-Hamel

November  
1917

Canadians capture Passchendaele

September  
1939

Start of the Battle of the Atlantic

19 August  
1942

Canadians take part in the Dieppe Raid

5 May  
1945

Canadians liberate the Netherlands  
8 May  
Victory in Europe (V-E) Day

# Canada's military—reflecting our diverse country



Photo: Library and Archives Canada

John Shiwak in 1915.

## A BRAVE INUIT SOLDIER FROM LABRADOR

The efforts of Indigenous service members over the years have been very impressive. One such individual was John Shiwak, an Inuit hunter and trapper from the Labrador village of Rigolet. He joined the Newfoundland Regiment in July 1915 during the First World War and was soon serving overseas.

He was a physically small man but his skill and bravery were immense, and his

experience in living off the land was put to great use in the military. Lance Corporal Shiwak established a battlefield reputation as a skilled sniper (sharp shooter) and scout (a soldier who stealthily gathers information on enemy positions). Sadly, he was killed by enemy artillery fire in France on 21 November 1917 during the Battle of Cambrai. The quiet soldier had made quite an impact on his comrades, with one officer writing to Shiwak's family that he was

“a great favourite with all ranks, an excellent scout and observer, and a thoroughly good and reliable fellow in every way.”

Lance Corporal Shiwak was 28 years old when he died and is commemorated on the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial in France. The tradition of this kind of proud Indigenous military service continues today in the Canadian Armed Forces.

## Fighting for LGBTQ2+ rights

Michelle Douglas was born in Ottawa. As a young woman, she pursued studies in law and joined the Canadian Armed Forces. Her career initially seemed promising. She served as an air force second lieutenant, and then was invited to join the Special Investigations Unit (SIU), uncovering criminal activity in the military. One of the first female officers to join this group, she was a trailblazer in her field,

but unfortunately would encounter major professional barriers.

At the time, one of the SIU's responsibilities was investigating service members who were thought to be homosexuals—a group that then faced great discrimination in the military. A polygraph machine was even sometimes used to try to identify individuals from the LGBTQ2+ community.

Douglas was a lesbian but wanted to remain in uniform, so she hid her personal life from her colleagues. However, she was soon interrogated by fellow investigators regarding her sexual orientation. She eventually was pressured to admit the truth and was discharged from the Canadian Armed Forces in 1989.

She reluctantly accepted her dismissal but launched a legal challenge against the military's discriminatory policy. In 1992, just before her case went to trial, the



Copyright: Michelle Douglas

Michelle Douglas in uniform.

Canadian Armed Forces settled out of court and formally reversed its unfair rules. By standing up for what was right, Douglas had helped pave the way for LGBTQ2+ rights in our country's military.



Photo courtesy of Claude Cromwell.

CWO Cromwell later in his career.

## Forty years of distinguished service

Claude “Ollie” Cromwell was born in Digby, Nova Scotia, and moved to Montreal as a teenager. He joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1979 and began a long career in military logistics.

Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) Cromwell would serve at bases across the country. He also took part in domestic military operations in response to natural disasters like the massive ice storm in

Eastern Canada in 1998 and forest fires in British Columbia in 2003.

CWO Cromwell also served overseas. He was posted in Lahr, West Germany, with Canada's NATO forces in Europe (1984-1990) and took part in international peace support efforts in the Golan Heights (1983), Cyprus (1993), Kosovo (1999) and Afghanistan (2006). As well, he was named Camp Sergeant Major for the

Canadian Armed Forces contingent at the Nijmegen Marches in the Netherlands in 2012. As the Task Force Sergeant Major of the Disaster Assistance Relief Team, CWO Cromwell also deployed to Nepal after a major earthquake in 2015.

CWO Cromwell's many contributions were recognized in several ways, including being named a member of the Order of Military Merit. He finally retired as a Divisional Sergeant Major within the Assistant Deputy Minister (Materiel) Group in 2019 after 40 years of distinguished service.

## MONUMENTAL THINKING

National monuments are important for our society—they help us remember our past artistically. Usually, artists and other professionals work together to create these memorials. Canada has unique ones both at home and overseas, such as the National War Memorial in Ottawa and the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in France, to commemorate different military efforts over the years. Interestingly, two major new war monuments have also been in the news.

One of these is a new National Monument to Canada's Mission in Afghanistan that will honour Canadian Armed Forces members, police officers, public servants and civilians who served there. It will also recognize the strong support of Canadians at home. What a great way to remember all those involved.

Another new memorial was installed in Turkey earlier this year to commemorate the Newfoundland Regiment's efforts at Gallipoli during the First World War. It will add to the existing set of five large bronze statues of a caribou (the emblem of the unit) that honour significant battles

the Newfoundlanders fought in France and Belgium. Known as the “Trail of the Caribou,” the original plan after the conflict had included a sixth statue at Gallipoli—a vision that has now finally come true.



Photo: Veterans Affairs Canada

The new “Trail of the Caribou” memorial in Gallipoli.

## DID YOU KNOW?



Photo: Department of National Defence

The Star of Military Valour.

Countless Canadians have displayed great courage while serving in uniform

over the years. During the First and Second World Wars, and in the Korean War, Canadians who earned valour medals received awards used in the British honours system.

In more recent decades, however, a revised set of Canadian bravery decorations has been used. One of these medals is the Star of Military Valour. Second in status only to the Victoria Cross, it is awarded for “distinguished and valiant service in the presence of the enemy.” Twenty people earned this prestigious medal during our country's mission to Afghanistan—the bravest of the brave.



Photo: Department of National Defence

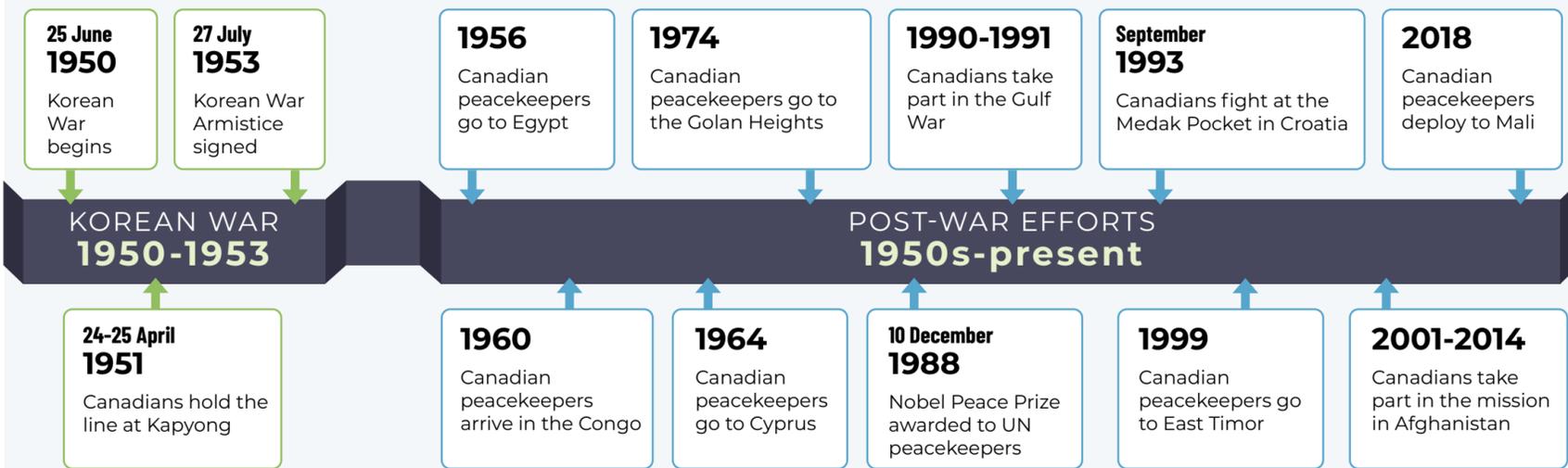
HMCS Athabaskan in the Persian Gulf in 1991.

## Navigating through minefields

HMCS Athabaskan was one of the Canadian Armed Forces vessels that took part in the Gulf War. One memorable occasion for those who served aboard her during the conflict came in February 1991. The ship went to the aid of the USS Princeton, an American warship that had been seriously damaged by Iraqi mines off the coast of Kuwait.

Keeping a vigilant watch while crossing hundreds of kilometres of dangerous waters and navigating through enemy minefields in the Persian Gulf, the Athabaskan escorted a Coalition fleet tugboat that would safely extract the American warship. The tension they felt during the mission was immense, but in the end it had been a success.

## Some Canadian military milestones



## A high-flying Quebecois

Gilles Lamontagne was a well-known politician. He was the mayor of Quebec City, a federal cabinet minister in Ottawa and crowned his political career as Lieutenant Governor of Quebec between 1984 and 1990.

Born in Montréal in 1919, he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1941 and became a bomber pilot. He served in England with the No. 425 Squadron, a unit made up almost exclusively of Francophone aviators. Nicknamed the “Alouettes” after a famous folk song, the squadron flew dangerous bombing missions over Europe. One night in March 1943, while returning from an attack on Germany, his plane was badly damaged. Lamontagne and his crew were forced to bail out over the Netherlands. He was captured by the Germans and sent to a prisoner of war (POW) camp, where he spent more than two years.

The days were long and the conditions were harsh. To help boost morale, Lamontagne taught some French to his fellow POWs. As the Second World War neared its end, the prisoners were made to march many kilometres a day as the Germans tried to keep them from being liberated by the advancing Allied forces. Unfortunately, many of them died of exhaustion during these long forced marches. However, Lamontagne survived this bitter ordeal and his experiences helped shape the impressive leadership he would later show in public life.



Gilles Lamontagne during the Second World War.

Photo: The Memory Project



## Turning remembrance thoughts into action

In the fall of 2020, Chris Murphy was asked to write an essay about remembering the sacrifices of Veterans. Instead of only writing, however, the University of Prince Edward Island student decided to take the assignment a few steps further.

He chose to do a hike for remembrance as a fundraiser for the Royal Canadian Legion's Poppy Fund which supports

Canadian Veterans and their families. Chris walked 100 kilometres over a two-day period to raise money for this important cause. His hike took almost 35 hours, but it was worth it. People noticed his efforts and donations started coming in. He ended up raising close to \$1,000 through his social media accounts. What a great way to spread the message of remembrance!

## DID YOU KNOW?

Canadian Armed Forces members serving far from home often find ways to make these difficult situations more bearable. One way they do this is with animal companions, like Digger the dog.



Digger the dog with some souvenirs of his service.

Photo: Department of National Defence

Digger was the official mascot of the Canadian Armed Forces Maintenance Platoon when it served in the Golan Heights. This lovable pooch completed more than 20 tours of duty in the tense buffer zone between Israel and Syria.

He held the honorary rank of sergeant and even had his picture taken with the Prime Minister of Canada when he visited the troops there in 2000.

## Ted Zuber—war artist



Korean War Veteran Ted Zuber.

Photo: Veterans Affairs Canada

Hill 355 and “the Hook.” It was dangerous duty and Zuber suffered wounds that would trouble him for the rest of his life.

Although not an official war artist while serving in Korea, he had brought along his sketch book and was eventually inspired to create paintings about Canada's wartime experiences there after he returned home. The Canadian War Museum learned of these efforts and amassed many of his works for their collection—making him the Canadian war artist for the Korean War.

In 1990, Zuber was asked to be an official war artist for the Gulf War. He later also went to Kosovo and Bosnia to paint a record of the Canadian Armed Forces peace support efforts there. Mr. Zuber passed away in 2018, leaving behind a rich legacy of art honouring the efforts of generations of Canadians who served in the cause of peace and freedom.

For hundreds of years, war artists have been capturing the experiences of conflict. For the Korean War, Canada had Ted Zuber. He was born in Montreal in 1932 and enlisted in the Canadian Army while still a teenager. Zuber trained as a paratrooper and would arrive in Korea in 1952 with the Royal Canadian Regiment where he was a sniper. His unit would see much action on the front lines at hot spots like

## Everyone loves a good burger!

During the Second World War, tens of thousands of Canadian soldiers spent the harsh winter of 1944-1945 near Nijmegen in the eastern Netherlands. After months of heavy action in Northwest Europe, they had a chance to rest a bit and prepare for the upcoming Allied campaign to finally defeat Germany.

The city of Nijmegen became quite Canadian, with our troops regularly rotating in from the front lines to stay with local civilians. The grateful Canadians in turn shared their food and other army

supplies with their Dutch hosts. Nijmegen was home to the Canada Club, where our service members could get a meal or a drink, see a show or attend dances. Next door was the Blue Diamond Hamburger Stand, an eatery where soldiers enjoyed free burgers, baked beans, delicious desserts and coffee.



Soldiers enjoying a burger in Nijmegen.

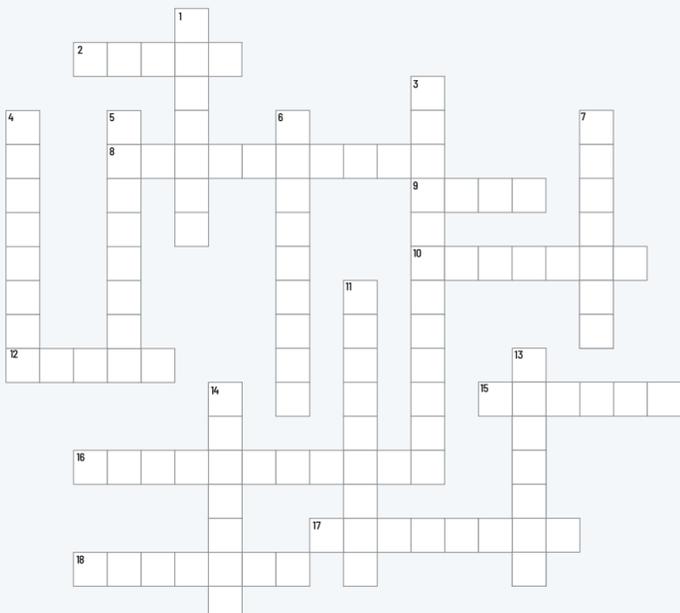
Photo: Library and Archives Canada



Images: Canadian Heritage

2021 National Capital Region banners.

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Did you read the newspaper stories carefully? All the answers to the crossword clues are found in the newspaper.

### Across

- Canadian \_\_\_\_\_ served in combat roles for the first time during the Gulf War.
- HMCS \_\_\_\_\_ helped rescue an American warship during the Gulf War.
- Twenty Canadians earned the \_\_\_\_\_ of Military Valour in Afghanistan.
- John Shiwak, an Inuit First World War soldier, was from this Labrador village.
- Chief Warrant Officer Claude “Ollie” Cromwell served in this country after a 2015 earthquake.
- War artist Ted Zuber fought in the \_\_\_\_\_ War.
- A new national monument for Canada's mission to \_\_\_\_\_ will be built in Ottawa.
- In Newfoundland and Labrador, July 1 is also known as \_\_\_\_\_ Day.
- The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry fought in the Battle of \_\_\_\_\_ in April 1951.

### Down

- One of Canada's longest peacekeeping missions took place in the Golan \_\_\_\_\_.
- Hundreds of Black Canadians served in the No. 2 \_\_\_\_\_ Battalion during the First World War.
- Canadian soldiers enjoyed the hospitality of this Dutch city in 1944-1945.
- Many Canadians who fought in Hong Kong came from this prairie province.
- A new memorial in Turkey commemorates the Newfoundland Regiment's efforts in \_\_\_\_\_.
- Last name of former military doctor who became New Brunswick's Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- Nickname of French Canadian bomber squadron that fought in the Second World War.
- Last name of the woman who fought for LGBTQ2+ rights in the Canadian Armed Forces.
- Last name of the Canadian diplomat who proposed sending peacekeepers to Egypt in 1956.