

THE CANADA TIMES

Celebrating little known or forgotten stories of our history



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Newsletter from The Jeanie Johnston Educational Foundation

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Leo Delaney

This is our first newsletter without the guidance and wisdom of our friend, Anne Forest whose support throughout the years was inspirational.

Over the years, the Jeanie Johnston Foundation has accomplished several projects which have influenced the education curriculum for students in Quebec and Canada. Partnering with LEARN (Leading English Education and Resource Network) which administers the curriculum created by the Ministry of Education Quebec, our role is to enhance the curriculum by bringing to the fore, moments in history either forgotten or ignored. We brought "Champlain" to attention with the Montreal Gazette - a four-page insert was printed (<http://www.montrealgazette.com/gie/champteach.html>) and distributed across Quebec and Canada, telling the tale of Champlain and highlighting some little known facts. This was given to all schools in Quebec and created an interest across Canada.

We also succeeded in having the Battle of Chateauguay included on the school's curriculum and influenced the Federal Government to name a ship in honor of the sacrifices made by the militia during the 1812 War led by Michel de Saleberry.

Grosse Ile has been recognized as an entry point for immigrants during the Famine times but 2016 saw the Quebec Ministry take note of our constant lobbying and they included it on the Compulsory Examination schedule for Quebec schools both French and English.

Our most recent efforts include bringing to the attention of Canadians the role played by French Canadians in World War I. This will be the subject of a Panel discussion at the University Club on April 3rd 2017. Canada's Leading Historian and founding Director, Dr. Desmond Morton will participate along with Michel Litalian of the Dept. of Defense. In turn we intend to sponsor a Public Debate for the "Papineau Cup" at McGill Debating Society.

The French Canadians in World War I

By Leo Delaney

The tale of "The participation of French Canadians in the Military during World War I" is an important story that has never been properly documented, especially in the school curricula. The Jeanie Johnston Educational Foundation has undertaken the task of bringing to the attention of Quebec and Canadian students and the public the story, generally ignored and seldom told and always overshadowed by the question of conscription.

In excess of 76,000 French Canadians enlisted in the Great War of 1914-1918. Previously it was thought that the participation was only 32,000 to 35,000 but recent studies have confirmed the higher of these figures. The casualties killed were 3,500 but it is not known at this time how many were wounded.

Desmond Morton, founding director of the Institute for the Study of Canada, one of Canada's most prominent historians did not mince words in commenting on the erroneous notion that Quebec was the only place in Canada where forced enlistment of soldiers for the Great War was a bone of contention. "The issue of conscription did not arise at the onset of the war," said Morton, "because the government had said that we would only send volunteers overseas, we should make our own decision."

Montreal was overwhelmingly enthusiastic. Crowds cheered the militia as they paraded through the streets. Young and even middle-aged men rushed to respond. The enthusiasm was shared by French- and English-speaking Montrealers, equally appalled that their mother countries faced German attack. "There are no longer French Canadians and English Canadians," *La Patrie*

declared "Only one race now exists, united by the closest bonds in a common cause."

The Minister of Defence, Sam Hughes, at first refused to authorize any French-language units but the second contingent of troops included the 22nd Infantry Battalion, a French-speaking unit (*Vingt Doos*) which went to France in 1915, a star battalion that fought with distinction in every major engagement until the end of the war. The commander, Lt. Col. Thomas-Louis Tremblay regarded the



Lt. Col. Thomas-Louis Tremblay
22nd (French Canadian) Battalion,
(*Van Doos*), First World War

battalion as representing all of French Canada and he worked hard to ensure that the 22nd acted with poise and bravery throughout the war. He led the attack on the village of Courcellette in the Somme sector of France. Capt. Georges Vanier (the future governor general), on leave due to an injury, noted that he had tears in his eyes reading of the battalion's conduct. Severe casualties were incurred.

Historically, the most published discussion as to the French Canadians was between Henri Bourassa, a grandson of Patriot leader, Louis-

Joseph Papineau, a founder of the *Le Devoir*, who attacked the Borden government for calling on Quebecers to defend the French in Europe while failing to stand up for the rights of francophones at home. Bourassa was challenged by the great-grandson of Louis-Joseph Papineau, Talbot Mercer Papineau who was one of the Quebecers to champion a pan-Canadian nationalism and was a highly respected lawyer who joined the Princess Patricia Light Infantry, not out of patriotic duty, but because, like many others, he believed “a good war” would enhance his credentials in the political arena. He might have become Prime Minister if fate had not robbed him of the opportunity.

He came to national prominence when his cousin Henri Bourassa opposed the war effort. Papineau’s replies to his cousin’s editorials were published in the *Le Devoir* during the height of the 1916 conscription crises and were carried by national newspapers across the world, including the Times of London and the Australian editions.

Extract of letter Talbot Mercer Papineau:

“If you were truly a Nationalist - if you loved our great country and without narrow mindedness longed to see her as the home of good and united people - surely you would have felt that in the agony of her losses in Belgium and France that Canada was suffering the birth pangs of her national life. There, even more than in Canada herself, her citizens are being knit together in a new existence, because when men stand side by side and endure a soldier’s life and face together a soldier’s death, they are united in bonds almost as strong as the closest blood ties.

Dear Cousin, if you have arrogated yourself to the term of Nationalist, how can you not understand that if, without the sacrifice of the British soldiers we can never hope to become a nation ourselves. What matters is not the whys and wherefores, or whether we are French or English, the one commanding fact is that Canada is at war and Canada and Canadian values have to be protected. As I write, French and English are fighting and dying side by side. Is their sacrifice to go for nothing?”

Talbot Papineau was killed at Passchendaele on October 30, 1917. “Talbot Papineau became a symbol not only of Passchendaele, but of all the golden promise by the Great War” Sandra Gwyn wrote in Tapestry of War. He was

awarded the Military Cross, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal for conspicuous gallantry.



Major Talbot M. Papineau, MC
Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light
Infantry

Of the 76,000 French Canadians who were involved in the Expeditionary Force many other French Canadians distinguished themselves in commanding the Canadian forces in some of the most critical battles of the conflict.

April 2017 will see the 100th anniversary of World War I and the Jeanie Johnston Foundation will endeavour to bring to the students through the education system many facts that have been ignored or forgotten in the curriculum which will show the glorious history of the French Canadians in World War I.

SOURCES

Library and Archives Canada

www.collectionscanada.gc.ca

Canadian War Museum:

<http://www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/>

The Vimy Foundation

www.vimyfoundation.ca/learn

World War I Medal of Honor Recipients
www.history.army.mil/moh/worldwari.html

Mount Allison University

<http://www.mta.ca/library/courage/canadasroleinwwi.html>

The Great War, film by Brian McKenna

cbc.ca/greatwar

The Week

www.theweek.co.uk

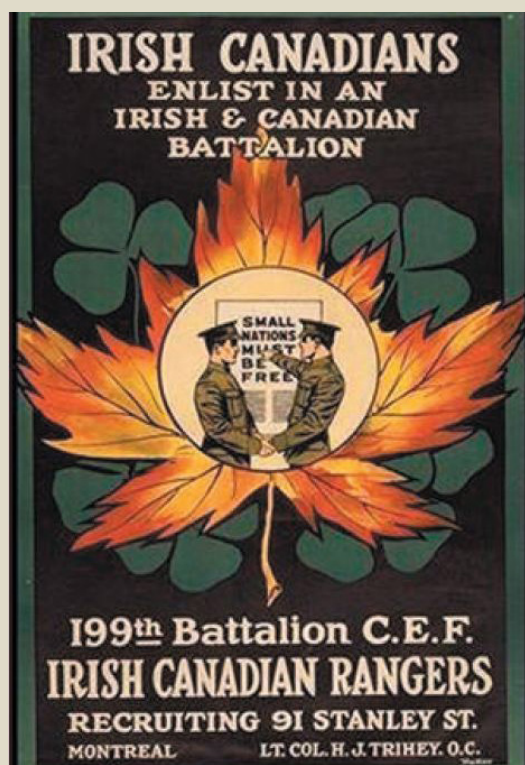
We have developed, with the help of Martina Branagan, a new format for your easier reading. Please let us have your comments.

The Irish Canadian Rangers

By Alan Hustak

For obvious historic reasons there was no love lost between Canadians of Irish descent and the British when the First World War began. Many of them, especially Irish Catholics, were ambivalent about going to fight in what was perceived as a deeply British cause, but because they were in Canada and subjects of the Crown, they knew they could not sit out the war. A number of so-called “Castle Irishmen,” who were sympathetic to Home Rule in Ireland but at the same time loyal to the Crown as their best hedge against social disorder, pledged their support to the war effort.

Harry Trihey, a Montreal lawyer, enlisted Canada’s Justice Minister, Charles Dougherty, the Member of Parliament for St. Anne’s and Father Gerald McShane, the pastor of St. Patrick’s Basilica, to see whether they would help him raise an Irish regiment, a token unit, which would be used for “home defence.” Trihey had been a Stanley Cup-winning hockey player and was popular in Montreal’s Irish community. Dougherty had served with the Mount Royal Rifles during the Riel uprising in Western Canada, and Father McShane was the spiritual leader of the Irish Catholic community.



Initially, they agreed you had to be of Irish descent to enlist in what at first was called the 55th Battalion. The appeal

to get volunteers was crude: “The enthusiasm which an Irishman always shows for a fight is proverbial... and we should be ready to stand in defence and serve a country that has given us such untold freedom and blessing,” urged one recruiting brochure.

Distinctive uniforms featured a Shamrock on the cap badge and Irish harps on their collars. Harry Trihey was given command of the militia unit, and many of his officers were Loyola boys. On April 24, 1915, the Duke of Connaught inspected the regiment. Reporting on the event, the Gazette said it was “a splendid review... the Irish Rangers looked particularly well and showed that they had been drilling very hard. This was aided in no small degree by their uniform, the buff leather gaiters adding greatly to the effect of their marching, which was very good, while their tunics were well set off by the Irish green shoulder straps.”

Following the sinking of the Lusitania off the Irish coast by a German submarine in May 1915, in which 1,198 civilians were killed, the 55th became an overseas battalion with the Canadian expeditionary force.



Lt. Col. Harry Trihey, 199th Battalion

Father McShane encouraged young men of the parish to “don a uniform and fight for the Union Jack,” a flag which had not in the past been able to win a full measure of their loyalty and allegiance. “Irish recruits,” he argued, “would perhaps be worth much more to the English arms than the fighting of those who have no such obstacles to overcome.” Quebec’s Lieutenant Governor, Charles Fitzpatrick, also encouraged Irish Canadians to volunteer.

A number of men from the 55th joined the overseas battalion known as the 199th Irish Rangers, which later would be called the Duchess of Connaught’s Own Irish Rangers after their royal patron, the wife of Prince Arthur, who was then the Governor-General of Canada.

Their motto: *Quis separabit* – Who shall separate us?

In February 1916, a fire, which many thought had been the result of German espionage, destroyed the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. In March, the Union Jack flew for the first time in the St. Patrick's Parade in solidarity with the war effort. All went well until Palm Sunday, April 16, when the Irish Ranger's regimental colours were unfurled in St. Patrick's Basilica. It was on the same day that open rebellion against the British, the largest insurrection in a century, had broken out in Dublin. The Easter Rising, as it was called, was doomed even before it began and the British crushed the revolt and sent 15 of its leaders to the firing squad. The Easter Rising was a sharp blow to the recruitment campaign for the Rangers in Montreal.



Cardinal Michael Logue with the Irish Canadian Rangers



James O'Donahoe, commander of the Irish Canadian Rangers with the Mayor of Armagh

The incident provoked anti-war sentiment, and the unit had trouble raising a full complement. The 199th Battalion Irish Rangers were about 200 men short when it sailed for Europe. Once it got there, the Rangers discovered their first tour of duty would be a propaganda visit in Ireland aimed at drumming up enthusiasm for the war.

When the tour finished, the Rangers were shocked to learn that the British High Command had decided to disband their unit and assigned its men to the 23rd Reserve Battalion as reinforcements. The officer corps in Britain, dominated by Protestant Anglo-Irish families with a strong stake in Ulster, didn't fully trust the Canadian contingent, which was almost 70 per cent Roman Catholic.

Although Canada's Justice Minister, Charles Dougherty, filed a protest with the British government, the decision to disband the unit stood.

Captain Alfred Shaughnessy, the eldest son of CPR President 1st Baron Shaughnessy, who joined the 60th Battalion through a draft of the Irish Rangers, was killed in 1916.

The only officer with the Rangers to die in battle was Lieutenant Harold Gallen, who died leading a battalion during the second battle of Ypres.

UPCOMING EVENTS

PANEL DISCUSSION

Dr. Desmond Morton OC, CD, FRSC &
Michel Litalian, CD, MA
Canadian Historians specialized in the history of the
Canadian military
University Club, 2047 Mansfield St, Montreal, H3A 1Y7
April 3, 2017, 5-7 p.m.
Cocktails
Guests: \$30.25
Register: reception@ucmontreal.ca or 514 288 0201

PAPINEAU CUP

McGill Debating Society hosts
French Canadians in WW1
Special Guest speakers
McGill University
April 2017

Watch this space.

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Suggestions for new articles should be
submitted to Alan Hustak, Editor.
hustak@themetropolitan.ca

New Initiative - Video of the Great Debate

For use in the school system Canada wide

The year 2017 is Canada's 150th Birthday and the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele (aka the Third Battle of Ypres).

Canadian forces won the Battle of Passchendaele but at great human cost. One of the casualties, Talbot Papineau, the grandson of Louis Joseph Papineau, the rebel of 1837, was killed in this battle. He was a prominent Montreal lawyer, a Rhodes Scholar and a graduate of McGill. He wrote a series of arguments in defence of the War in response to his cousin Henri Bourassa who was opposing the war which were published in *Le Devoir*. Talbot's arguments were so powerful that they appeared in newspapers from London to Australia. Copies of the letters are preserved in the War Museum, Ottawa. He was a Major in the Princess Patricia's Regiment and was awarded the Military Cross (MC).

We propose to make a video clip using the views expressed by both men. The video will be illustrated by historical photographs and

war scenes. This can be used as a template by students of various age groups across the country, who may debate wars in general including WWI and WWII.

Accompanying the video will be student's worksheets for elementary, secondary, High school and university levels, based on different curriculum demands of varying age groups in Canada. The work sheets will contain:

- A summary of WWI,
- The arguments used by Papineau and Bourassa,
- Guides for formal debating,
- Ideas for research,
- Lesson plans for teachers made by teachers and
- Information on relevant web sites and books.

The curriculum package should be given free to each Provincial school system and University departments that ask for them. It should also be made available to International school systems.

RESOURCES

www.irishfamine.ca

Effects of the Irish famine victims' arrival into Canada and the USA

www.canadarailwaytimes.com

Building of the Victoria Bridge, the founding of the Grand Trunk railway and the effect of this on sports, entertainment, politics and education

www.jeaniejohnstoneducation.com

Promotes the study of Canadian history and immigration

www.hospitalier.ca

History and aims of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem

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