

Internet Resources: Canada and the Great War

Glenn Wright shares a collection of links to online resources for researching your Canadian WWI ancestor

MANY WEBSITES ARE CITED IN other articles in this edition, but it is useful to repeat some of these sites here and to list others that will be of assistance when researching Canadians in the First World War.

General Reference

As a general reference site, the Canadian War Museum, www.warmuseum.ca, has an online exhibition about the war. Some battalion photographs, excerpts from diaries and some letters have been digitized as a teaser for more to come in the next few years.

Likewise, "Canada at War" has helpful reference material, www.canadaatwar.ca. Veterans Affairs Canada, www.veterans.gc.ca also has a series of short essays on Canadian participation in the war.

The Canadian government is commemorating the war online with a website that is promising to be a very informative resource devoted to all aspects of the war at home and abroad;

see "World War Commemorations" on the Canada 150 website, www.canada150.gc.ca.

On similar lines, the British Library, www.bl.uk, has launched an excellent retrospective of the Great War with over 500 short articles on almost every aspect of the war. While not related to the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), the information on the site and the illustrations are a real treasure for anyone interested in the war.

Understanding the Records

On understanding service and the records associated with service, Library and Archives Canada (LAC) itself explains the records in some detail on the Military Heritage portal, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/Pages/military-heritage.aspx>. The Regimental Rogue, www.regimentalrogue.com, offers sound advice and a comprehensive explanation of the records. Many researchers prefer to share information,

knowledge, and best practices. The Canadian Expeditionary Force Study Group, www.cefresearch.ca, does just that in an excellent forum that researchers at all levels will find beneficial. The Canadian Great War Project, www.canadiangreatwarproject.com, is another fine effort to commemorate all those who served in the war.

The Lloyd Reeds Map Collection at McMaster University Library features trench maps and aerial photographs of the Western Front, www.mcmaster.ca/maps.

Canadian soldiers also served in Siberia in 1918-1919 as part of a British force dispatched to Russia in support of those opposed to the Bolsheviks. Canada's Siberian Expedition, www.siberianexpedition.ca, tells the story with documents and photographs.

War Dead

On war dead, the Canadian Virtual War Memorial, www.veterans.gc.ca, provides

access to the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, www.cwgc.org, relating to Canadians. The Veterans Affairs website also has a link to the Book of Remembrance, information and illustrations of war medals and several short articles on aspects of the First World War. "Finding the Forty-Seven: Canadian Nurses of the First World War", www.rememberingfirstworldwarnurses.blogspot.ca, is dedicated to collecting and sharing information on Canadian nurses who lost their lives during the war. For the 3,885 Canadians who are buried in the United Kingdom, biographical and service details, photographs and more is available at Canadian War Graves in the UK, www.canadianukgravesww1.co.uk.

Subscription websites such as Ancestry, www.ancestry.ca, have unique information for the First World War researcher. The Circumstances of Death and War Graves Registers, while digitized and online at LAC, are also indexed on Ancestry.

Canadians in British Service

For Canadians in the British flying services, the Air Force Association website, www.airforce.ca, has information on all those Canadians who received honors and awards during the war, whether they were with the Royal Flying Corps (RFC), the

Specific Units

In recent years, a number of unit specific websites have been developed and with the commemoration of the war beginning this year, more and more such sites will be created. The sites listed here include biographical and service information, photographs and may have letters, diaries, nominal rolls, newspaper clippings, ephemera, transcribed war diaries and more. A simple google search by numbered battalion (e.g., 123 Battalion CEF) might every well reveal additional sites.

2nd Construction Battalion,
<http://ns1758.ca/ruck/combat2a.html>

3rd Battalion,
<http://cefresearch.ca/matrix/Army%20Corps/Divisions/1st%20Division/1st%20Infantry%20Brigade/3rd%20Battalion.htm>

4th Canadian Mounted Rifles, 1914-1919, www.4cmr.com

19th Battalion, www.piddingworth.com

21st Battalion, www.21stbattalion.ca

28th Battalion, www.nwbattalion.com

38th Battalion, <http://38thbattalion.blogspot.com>

50th Battalion, Ross Playfair Letters Project,
www.rcplayfair.ca/welcome

52nd Battalion, www.52ndbattalion.com

54th Battalion, www.54thbattalioncef.ca

85th Battalion, <http://bdbarry.tripod.com/id103.htm>

94th Battalion, www.94thbattalioncef.ca

102nd Battalion, www.102ndbattalioncef.ca

106th Battalion, www.angelfire.com/trek/rifles/rindex.htm

117th Battalion, www.117thbattalion.com

Russians in the CEF, www.russiansinthecef.ca

Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) or the Royal Air Force (RAF).

Since Canadians served with British forces, in the Army, Navy, nursing and especially the flying services, familiarity with the National Archives of England and Wales (TNA), www.nationalarchives.co.uk, is essential. TNA's "Research Guides" for the war are use-

ful for an understanding the war.

Location Specific

Other websites are dedicated to soldiers from a specific geographic area. Lennox and Addington Historical Society first published information on its soldiers in 1922, but now, with more records available, the information has been updated and is now online

at www.lennoxandaddingtonhistoricalsociety.ca. The Elgin County Archives, www.elgin.ca, has posted digital images of letters and postcards and over 500 photographs of soldiers taken by a local photographic studio. Much of the information relates to the 91st Battalion. The Milton Historical Society has posted biographical sketches and some photos of local soldiers, www.miltonhistoricalsociety.ca, and so too has Guysborough County, Nova Scotia, www.guysboroughgreatwarveterans.blogspot.ca. At McMaster University Library, the Digital Collections, accessed from the Library's home page, includes an exhibition, *Peace & War in the 20th Century*, with emphasis on the war and its impact on Hamilton, Ontario. The Elgin County Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society, www.elginogs.ca, has posted online two publications researched and written by James McCallum: *Age Shall Not Weary Them: The Men of East Elgin Who Made the Supreme Sacrifice in the First Great War* (2008) and *We Will Remember Them: The Men & Women of East Elgin Who Served in the First Great War, 1914-1918* (2010). Both include biographical information, newspaper clippings and some photographs.

Several universities have also created First World War commemoration sites. Queen's University has pre-

pared "Queen's Remembers", billed as "an archival look at World War I" and includes a history of the war and its impact on the university, a list of those who died, often accompanied with photographs, clippings, ephemera or correspondence. McGill University has posted a list of staff and students who died in the war, with name, rank, unit, McGill degree, date and place of death, www.mcgillremembers.mcgill.ca. The Beaton Institute at Cape Breton University features a collection of archival records relating to the war and the people of Cape Breton, www.cbu.ca/beaton/archway. The University of Manitoba Libraries have a digital collection of wartime documents and an online exhibition, "The Canadian Wartime Experience" with letters and photographs. The Archives and Special Collections at the University of Saskatchewan have prepared a searchable database of students who enlisted with the Canadian or British forces.

The Internet Archive, www.archive.org, has assembled an impressive collection of digitized books and documents from Canadian libraries and the general public. Regimental histories, nominal rolls and books about the war and Canada's role in the war are available here. Find My Past, www.findmypast.com, has an extensive collection of regimen-

tal histories and other books relating to Canada at war.

Individual Soldiers

It is impossible to estimate the number of letters that soldiers sent home during the course of the war, but it must have been in the millions. While only a small percentage of these have survived, they generally offer a personal and often revealing perspective on the war. While many letters and diaries have been collected in books, more and more of them are online. The Canadian Bank of Commerce published two volumes, *Letters from the Front, 1920-1921* consisting of letters sent home or to other Bank employees. Both volumes can be consulted at the Internet Archives, www.archives.org, and in many libraries. Note that these volumes also include biographical sketches of the 1,701 employees who served in the Great War, including 248 who lost their lives. The volumes also include some photographs.

Several websites include letters from the Front from newspapers and family collections: Canadian Great War Project, www.canadiangreatwarproject.com, "Witness to Events" includes letters published by newspapers during the war. The name of the soldier, the date of the letter, where published and a transcript is available online. Canadian Letters, www.canadianletters.ca, includes a section on the Great War with hundreds of

THE LAND OF GOOD NEIGHBOURS ©: Benner Family, World War One - Canada. Follow a Canadian f...

Flipcard ▾ Home Benner Family Western Front 1914 Western Front 1915-1916 Somme Battlefield 1916 Western Front 1917 Western Front 1918 Western Front Last Hundred Days Europe Map 2010

Recent	Date	Label	Author
THE UNTOLD AGONIES OF WAR			
NOTES AND COMMENTS December 19, 1918			
Murray's Possessions			
War Post Cards			
NOTES AND COMMENTS December 12, 1918			
AYLMER VISITED BY AN AIRSHIP			
NOTES AND COMMENTS November 28, 1918			
NO WONDER THE FRENCH HATE			
NOTES AND COMMENTS November 21			
NOTES AND COMMENTS November 14			
AYLMER CELEBRATES SIGNING OF			
Canadians at Mess			
PRISONERS' RELEASE TO BE			
Sorry, No Passes			

The Benner family site at www.canadaworldwarone.com.

transcribed letters, some from archives, but many that have been received from private sources. They are arranged by the name of the soldier.

Soldier letters can be found elsewhere online, including the Glenbow-Alberta Museum and Archives. "First War Letters at Glenbow" features a collection of letters drawn from ten different fonds and are either transcribed or digitized. The Archives of Ontario website dedicated to the war also includes digitized letters and other documents.

An attempt to create a blog for CEF soldiers does not appear to be very active, but the information that has been posted is very interesting and includes biographical information, photographs, diary extracts and more on a number of soldiers, www.cefww1soldiername.blogspot.ca. A site dedicated to the Benner family

in the Great War, www.canadaworldwarone.com, has letters, photos, ephemera, maps, clippings and more. Similar sites include the following: "An Echo in My Heart: Letters of Frederick and Evelyn Albright", www.sites.google.com/site/echoinmyheartsite/home; letters and postcards of Private Richard William Mercer, 1st Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade, www.freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~brett/cmgc/rwm_letters.html; the diaries of Leonard L. Youell, www.ve.torontopubliclibrary.ca/showcase/youell; and nursing sisters are represented by Helen L. Fowlds' letters, diaries and photographs, www.trentu.ca/admin/library/archives/ffowldswelcome.htm.

While the term "war bride" was not common after the First World War, several hundred marriages took place between Canadian soldiers and British women. "Canadian

War Brides of the First World War" is an interesting site with information, some names and biographies of women who came to Canada after marrying a member of the CEF or the British flying services, www.ww1warbrides.blogspot.ca.

The Imperial War Museum (London, England) hosts a bold online initiative to document and tell the stories of all those who served in the Great War, Canadians included. "Lives of the First World War" was launched in May 2014, www.livesofthefirstworldwar.org.

This summary of First World War related websites is not meant to be definitive, but more as an introduction to a wide range of online resources. The next few years will undoubtedly see many more online projects to document Canadians at war.

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