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L'hon. Perrin Beatty, C.P.
L'hon. Bill Graham, C.P., c.r.
Le Gén. John de Chastelain, C.C., C.M.M., C.D., C.H.

9 December 2019

Dear Friends of Hill 70,

Today it is snowing lightly in Kingston and the Christmas season is about to begin. It has been a very busy and successful year for the Hill 70 Memorial project. This newsletter will attempt to inform you of some of the events you may not have been able to attend. Please get your egg nog ready and enjoy the news.

Construction is done!



The Hill 70 Memorial is Opened

On 2 October we had a Completion Ceremony in Loos-En-Gohelle to mark the end of construction of the Memorial site. There was a superb turnout from many of the Regiments and Corps which fought at Hill 70. We also had good representation from other nations which formed part of the British Army in 1917. The ceremony included a Guard of Honour from the French Army pictured below with soldiers of The Queen's York Rangers (1st Americans) RCAC, a storied regiment, one of whom was awarded a Victoria Cross at Hill 70 in 1917.



Several musical interludes were provided by The Somme Battlefield Pipe Band and a childrens Choir from Lens, and pictured here are some of their choristers going forward to lay flowers at the dedication.





There was a flyover of vintage first war aircraft which were painted in the colours of one of the Canadian Squadrons of the Royal Flying Corps which fought over the Battle of Hill 70.



Here are Sopwith Pup and a Nieuport heading toward the Hill 70 Memorial



There is considerable bureaucracy involved with performing aircraft Flyovers while France has a State of Emergency imposed. As a result, these antique warplanes simply practised 'touch and goes' at the airfield, which is only a few hundred yards from the Hill 70 Memorial.

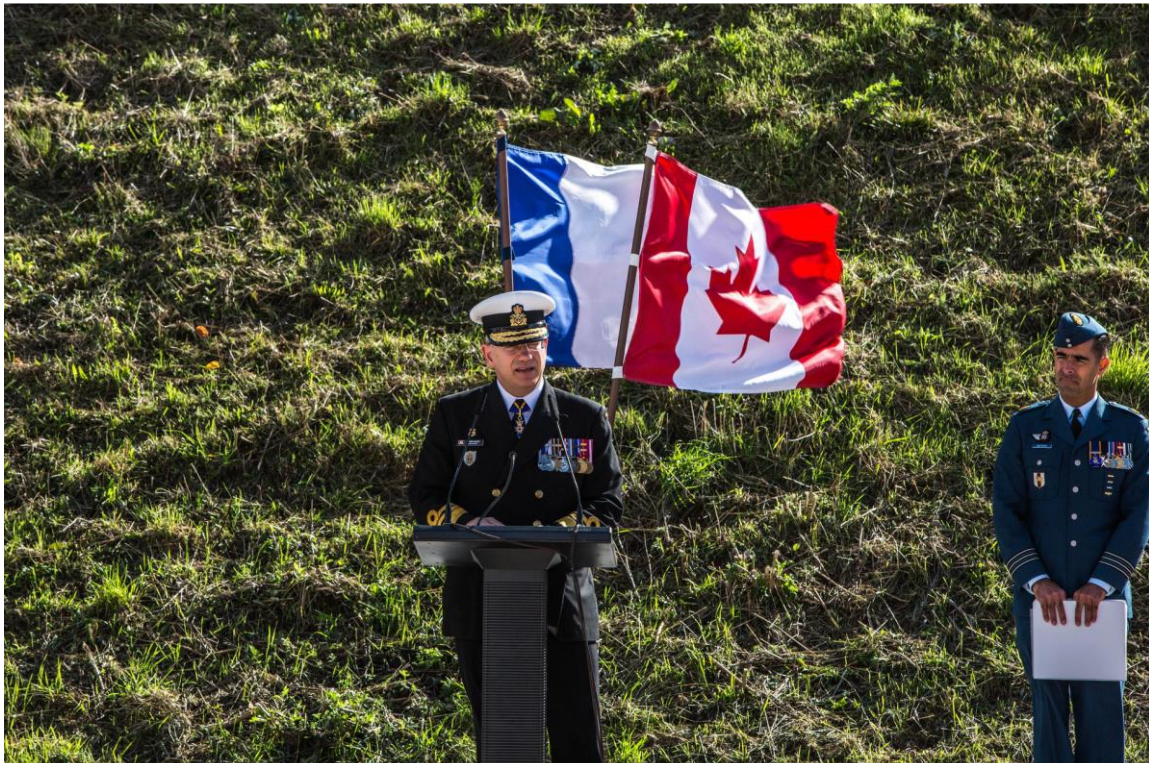


Several foreign delegations planned to attend, including a Minister of the Republic of Ireland, and, pictured here, the Defence Attaché from the Ukraine embassy in Paris Colonel Vadym Kuchma who attended to commemorate Cpl Filip Konowal VC after whom the first walkway is named. Other DAs attending were BGen Charles Schoeman of South Africa, and BGen SK Sharma of India. Caroline Bartlett, Director of the Australian Sir John Monash Centre was also present.



We were honoured to have many VIPs: Speeches were given by the French Prefect Fabien Sudry and the Canadian Ambassador Isabel Hudon.

The Reviewing officer was our NATO representative Vice Admiral Hawco,





The Visitors Kiosk had all of its information panels mounted and shown here are Commissioner Brenda Lucki of the RCMP , the Corps Sgt Major Al McCambridge, and Inspector Andre Martin reading about the story of Hill 70.





Commissioner Brenda Lucki opens the Royal Northwest Mounted Police Plaza in the presence of The Canadian Ambassador Isabel Hudon, The Prefect Fabien Sudry, The reviewing officer Vice Admiral Hawco, Brigadier General Greg Smith, Mayor Jean Francois Caron, Privy Councilor Andy Leslie (both of his grandfathers fought at Hill 70 in 1917, and both eventually became Ministers of Defence)

As part of the fundraising efforts over the past five years certain walkways, plazas, benches and trees were named after soldiers who served at the battle of Hill 70. Our Project Manager and Director Doug Green ably ran this part of the program. All of the principal walkways are named for the six Victoria Cross recipients. The last walkway to be built is named for a private soldier, Frederick Lee who was killed at the battle and who has no known grave.

Other Canadian Army units were able to send contingents of young soldiers and veterans to the Completion Ceremony. We were delighted to have members of the Governor General's Foot Guards to honour Major Massey Learmonth VC. Soldiers and associates of the British Columbia Regiment were present to dedicate the walkways of their two VC recipients Robert Hill Hanna, and Michael James O'Rourke. At a previous ceremony there, The Calgary Highlanders sent 30 soldiers to honour their own Hill 70 Victoria Cross recipient, Private Harry W. Brown.



Bob Hanna, the son of Robert Hill Hanna VC was present for the dedication of the Walkway named for his father. Ron Lucas and Joanne Sutherland's fathers both fought at the Battle of Hill 70: Ron's dad's body was never found, and Joanne's dad was dangerously wounded. We were honoured to have them attend.



Bench named for Senior Chaplain Major Frederick Scott donated by the Order of Saint George. Looking on are all the Chevaliers of the Order: Susan Everett, Warren Everett, The Chaplain General Major General Guy Chapdelaine, Dr John Cowan, and Mark Hutchings.

As a result of the enormous generosity of Vivienne Poy and Robert Ho the walkway to the Obelisk was completed. I joke that it is the most expensive walkway in NATO, because it has a bridge and a trench – these were designed to permit a gradual incline for wheelchair access. The walkway is named for Private Frederick Lee, a son of Chinese immigrants who became a machine-gunner in the 172nd Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary force. That unit is perpetuated by the Rocky Mountain Rangers whose Honorary Colonel, Paul Newell, generously helped pay for an entire Platoon of the RM Rang to travel to France.



Another honorary Ranger, Jack Gin, helped finance two benches to commemorate Lee and the 172nd Battalion, and he is funding a film short about “Finding Frederick Lee”. Frederick Lee was transferred to the 41st Bn CEF upon arrival in France and was killed on 21 August 1917. He has no known grave. It is most fitting that this walkway was named for a modest Private soldier, from a Battalion which was broken up for reinforcements, and who gave the supreme sacrifice at Hill 70. He was a forgotten man, from a forgotten unit, in a forgotten Victory. **Well, they are forgotten no more!**



The trench is lined with inscriptions written by young Canadian soldiers on 1917 on the tunnel walls beneath no-man's-land. For many soldiers it was the last thing they ever wrote.

Media

Support from our media partners has been tremendous. The Globe and Mail ran a great story about the creation of the monument and they also printed a full page which named all our donors. We cannot thank the Globe (and the donors) enough! We also had a number of good interviews published in French and English around the world. Global and CTV did several reports on the monument and the event. A list of computer links to those articles and interviews is included at the end of this letter. There are also numerous French publications which are now covering the increasing traffic to the Memorial Site. Local historical Association, Sur les Traces de La Grand Guerre often publish articles on this important Battle which contributed to the eventual independence of Canada.

Tours

There are more and more visitors who now go to the site. Tour groups guided by historians now have a spot to focus on. Various ceremonies have been held at the monument by people whom we don't know, and pipers now go and perform solos for families that we only find out about afterward. It is wonderful to see the heightened awareness of the Battle of Hill 70 and the place it deserves in Canadian history gradually gaining importance. Similarly, the people of Loos are beginning to feel quite possessive of the Memorial Park, and many are requesting the town of Loos take good care of 'their' park when they perceive there is anything amiss.

Beer

Warren Everett has considerable success with our friends at 4 Degree Brewing. The LCBO has agreed to carry the Hill 70 Beer, (Sir Arthur Curries Choice) and we are now helping to create a marketing plan to ensure every Liquor Store in Ontario will have this wonderful brew available. It is quite appropriately a Belgian Blonde with (Hill) 7.0 % alcohol, so I won't have one until this writing is done.



Education

Susan Everett's education team is still at work creating new material, not only to send to all the High Schools across the land, but also for interested adult history buffs. There are already two graphic novels, one about Brock Chisolm (who survived Hill 70 and went on to become an accomplished Doctor, Surgeon General and finally first head of the World Health Organization. The second novel is about Frederick Lee who was killed at Hill 70, and who has no known grave. He was born in Canada to Chinese parents, became an honour student, joined the army at a time when BC had some very racist laws concerning Asians. He served his country well in the Rocky Mountain Rangers, then The Royal Westminister Regiments and was killed at Hill 70. He has no known grave. Rob Engen and Matt Barret are now part way through the third novel whose subject is Sir Arthur Currie, the man who led the Canadian Corps to victory from Hill 70 to Armistice. This novel will be entirely historically accurate and will be academically peer reviewed. I can't wait to see it. We will inform you of just how it will be available.

Other education events which have occurred are speeches given by our team and supporters in October: Jack Gin, Robert Engen and I did a presentation at University of Toronto to a full Hall named for Vivienne Poy's father. We know it was well received because many listeners have approached us for help to their own projects. The next day John Scott Cowan gave an excellent presentation about Hill 70 to the RCMI as one of their series of Speakers lunches. Then in November Rob Baxter our hard-working Development Officer gave a presentation to The Brantford Think Tank on the significance of the Battle of Hill 70. Finally, Susan Everett gave a brief at London Women's Canadian Club to a full house of 700, which again attracted considerable media attention



Susan Everett with Karen Lowery, the President of the Canadian Club in London

Fundraising

Our fundraising is nearing completion and it now aims to raise just enough funds so that maintenance in perpetuity can be assured for the memorial park. There are also some small yearly expenses which will continue into the future: annual license fees for our new App (generously financed by Richard Wong) which can be downloaded from the App store and used for teaching or for touring the site, and other media like the website which provides information in accordance with our Charter. Also remaining to be funded are the activities of Teachers and Students Battlefield Travel Bursaries, which are designed to continue to spread the word to Canadians in future.

Warren Everett, our indefatigable comptroller, tells us that we are only short \$60k (6%) in meeting our Legacy Fund goal so perhaps your Christmas spirit can help remedy this relatively small requirement.

The future

Our Project Manager, LCol(retired) Doug Green has added the final touches to our long Gantt Chart. We have accomplished all of the aims of the charity as laid out in our Charter; we are now planning for the future. Several options are available to us to ensure that the victory so dearly won at Hill 70 and its importance to the development of Canada remains in the minds of the public. We have offered the ownership of the Memorial in France to the Canadian Government, and now that it is back to work we hope to have a reply soon from them. Should they not be interested, we have created the framework so that the project can be continued by other means. (Trusts, endowments, other similarly minded Charities, etc.) All these things are in train and consuming the time of lawyers, notaries, and accountants, so if you wish to encourage your friends to contribute to this permanent memorial to a major event in Canada's history please do so. (Our marvellous volunteers and long-serving board members continue to work for free.)

The Hill 70 Memorial team wish you and yours a joyous Christmas season and all the very best for the new year. Many thanks for your continuing support.

Sincerely,



Mark Hutchings
Chairman,

The Hill 70 Memorial Project

List of Computer links to our Hill 70 news (both print and electronic)

<https://globalnews.ca/video/6144850/global-news-morning-learns-more-about-a-forgotten-battle-of-the-first-world-war-hill-70>

<https://globalnews.ca/video/5983252/park-honouring-battle-of-hill-70-opens-in-france>

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1612790851548>

<https://globalnews.ca/news/5981549/canadas-forgotten-battle-hill-70-legacy/>

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/canadian-wwi-victory-no-longer-historical-footnote-with-new-hill-70-memorial-1.4620083>

<https://www.lesoleil.com/actualite/la-bataille-de-la-cote70-en-1917-une-histoire-meconnue-f5b3fa87786835be3fa918b7530b33d5>

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/hill-70>

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-remembering-canadas-forgotten-battle-for-hill-70/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G6tDPQ74KMU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juBk0G1hn0U>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PuKdUG5OQjQ>

<https://www.facebook.com/hill70memorial/videos/1601692056527533/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-41004040>

<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/hill-70-dedication-ceremony-unveils-new-monument-in-honor-of-canadians-who-fought-619161634.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-national-defence/services/military-history/history-heritage/casualty-identification-military/battle-hill-70-1917.html>

<https://ucc.ca/2017/08/23/hill-70-centennial-commemoration/>

<https://twitter.com/hill70memorial?lang=en>

<https://www.facebook.com/hill70memorial/videos/1601714953191910/>

<https://www.facebook.com/hill70memorial/videos/1601003013263104/>

<https://www.facebook.com/hill70memorial/videos/1331371963559545/>

<https://infotel.ca/newsitem/kamloops-wwi-soldier-frederick-lee-to-be-honoured-at-french-war-memorial/it62058>

<https://www.mykawartha.com/community-story/7388040-hill-70-monument-receives-a-boost-from-peterborough-gala/>

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/remains-of-canadian-soldier-killed-in-wwi-battle-in-france-finally-found-1.3948310>

<https://www.cmfmag.ca/remember/remembering-the-battle-of-hill-70/>

<https://cfjctoday.com/2019/10/29/kamloops-soldiers-honoured-at-hill-70-memorial-park-in-france/>



*New Prairie Grass featuring the natural flowers of Northern France
has been the planted throughout the Memorial site*