

For Immediate Release
25 September 2019



Ceremony in France Will Cap 8 Year Effort by Canadians Hill 70 Memorial Last of Its Era in Europe



Loos-en-Gohelle, France - An eight-year effort by Canadian volunteers to build what is likely the last memorial to the First World War in Europe, will culminate in a completion ceremony here on 2 Oct. The event will be attended by relatives of the fallen, local citizens and dignitaries from Allied and Commonwealth nations.

The Hill 70 Memorial, with its striking white limestone obelisk, elevated pathways and maple-leaf amphitheatre, is finally set to open to the general public on a permanent basis in early October, after a widespread shortage of concrete last year forced a delay in its completion.

Dedicated to the members of the Canadian Corps who fought at the Battle of Hill 70 from 15-25 August 1917, the memorial is the culmination of efforts by a group of determined Canadians who began work on the project in 2011.

The battle marked the first time the Canadian Corps had fought on its own and under a Canadian-born Commander – Arthur Currie. It was an extraordinarily hard-won victory for the Canadians, who repelled 21 German counter-attacks after taking the high ground. Six Victoria Crosses were awarded to members of the Corps, highlighting the intensity of the action that saw continual hand-to-hand combat. Some 5,700 Canadian casualties were sustained in taking and holding this objective.

But this great accomplishment, instrumental in hastening Canada's path to nationhood, had somehow been overlooked by Canadian historians for almost a century. The Hill 70 Memorial Project set out to put things right.

“We were helping to write a page in our national history that had never been fully explained to Canadians.” said Mark Hutchings, Chairman of the Hill 70 Memorial Project.

To properly tell the story of Hill 70’s significance to as many Canadians as possible, the project’s volunteers developed a comprehensive education program. This included the commissioning an official history of Hill 70 that became a best seller on Amazon, the publication of educational kits distributed free of charge to 3,500 high schools across Canada, a series of historical videos, the funding of battlefield tours for Canadian history teachers, and a mobile exhibit that travelled the country.

“Looking back on everything now, it’s an astonishing body of work to have been accomplished by a volunteer-driven initiative that involved no Canadian public sector funding” said Dr. John Scott Cowan, the Hill 70 Vice Chair and Principal Emeritus of The Royal Military College of Canada.

The Project raised \$12.5 million in donations and gifts in kind. Individual donations ranged from three dollars to \$1.5 million and were received from Canadians from coast to coast. The governments of Ireland and France also contributed, and France saved the project \$2 million by waiving taxes. Land for the memorial was provided by the town of Loos-en-Gohelle, which is located in the midst of the original Canadian start line of the battle, about 200 kilometres north of Paris.

Elements at the memorial site include walkways named for each of the Canadian Victoria Cross recipients, a walkway designated in honour of a Canadian-born soldier of Chinese heritage who died in the battle - Private Frederick Lee and a plaza dedicated to the 2,500 members of the Royal North West Mounted Police who fought in the Canadian Corps during the war.

The October 2 ceremony at the Hill 70 Memorial will feature a children’s choir from Lens, The Somme Battlefield Pipe Band, a RCMP contingent in scarlet dress, and a guard of honour from the French Army.

The location of the Hill 70 Memorial is Latitude: 50.452859 | Longitude: 2.800527

Media attending the event are asked to arrive prior to 12:00 pm Noon. A designated press area has been set up in the amphitheater at the site. A schedule for the day is available in advance upon request.

Additional Information:

Further background on the historical significance of the Battle of Hill 70, notes on the design & architecture of the memorial site, Frederick Lee, the RNWMP contingent of the Canadian Corps, and a map of the memorial’s location in Loos-en-Gohelle - France, may be found on the Project’s website at www.Hill70.ca under the tabs “*Press Releases*”.

A free audio/video series for visitors on the history of the Battle may be downloaded from the App Store: <http://bit.ly/Hill70History> or Goggle Play: <http://bit.ly/Hill70history>

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Bienvenue au parc mémorial de la Cote 70

Ce parc est un hommage aux soldats du Corps canadien qui, entre le 15 et le 25 août 1917, capturèrent la Côte 70 : une victoire qui avait échappé aux Alliés depuis le début de la Grande Guerre en 1914. La pièce maîtresse de ce parc commémoratif est l'obélisque symbolisant la victoire du Corps canadien.

Welcome to the Hill 70 Memorial Park

This park is a tribute to the soldiers of the Canadian Corps who between 15 and 25 August 1917 captured and held Hill 70, a victory which had eluded the Allies since the beginning of the Great War in 1914. The centrepiece of the Memorial is an obelisk signifying the victory of the Canadian Corps.

Plan du site

- 1 Centre d'information des visiteurs
- 2 Allée Robert Hill Hanna, Croix de Victoria
- 3 Obélisque
- 4 Allée O'Kill Massey Learmonth, Croix de Victoria
- 5 Allée vers le sommet Frederick Lee
- 6 Amphithéâtre Général sir Arthur Currie
- 7 Allée Michael O'Rourke, Croix de Victoria

Site Map

- 1 Visitor's Information Centre
- 2 Philip Komowal Victoria Cross Walk
- 3 172nd Battalion CEF Plaza
- 4 Frederick Lee Walk
- 5 General Sir Arthur Currie Amphitheatre
- 6 Michael O'Rourke Victoria Cross Walk
- 7 Robert Hill Hanna Victoria Cross Walk
- 8 Obelisk
- 9 O'Kill Massey Learmonth Victoria Cross Walk
- 10 Royce Plaza
- 11 Frederick Hebbson Victoria Cross Walk
- 12 Harry Brown Victoria Cross Walk
- 13 Royal North-West Mounted Police Plaza
- 14 Loos Military Cemetery

QR code 1: [https://www.hill70.ca](#)

QR code 2: [https://www.hill70.ca](#)

Pour améliorer votre visite du site, vous pouvez télécharger l'histoire audio-visuelle de la bataille de la Côte 70 depuis l'App Store ou Google Play. Ceci est possible gratuitement grâce à la générosité de Grace et Richard K. Wong de Vancouver, Colombie-Britannique.

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QR code 2: [https://www.hill70.ca](#)

To enhance your site tour, you may download an audio-visual history of the Battle of Hill 70 from the AppStore or Google Play. This is made available without charge through the generosity of Grace and Richard K. Wong of Vancouver, British Columbia.

**Bonne visite.
Enjoy your visit.**