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Dear Friends of Hill 70,

18 Apr 2019

Your team has been very busy in the last year and we want to update you on the tremendous progress made. As we speak, phase two construction in Loos En Gohelle is nearing completion. This was made possible by an enormously generous gift from Mr. Robert H.N. Ho of Vancouver and another by Senator Dr. Vivienne Poy. Next week the final phase of construction will begin which is the resurfacing of several pathways around the Memorial park; thanks to your generosity and hard work it will be truly world-class when completed.



Henrietta Southam, Cyril Woods, Jamilah and Sean Murray at the Hill 70 Victory party in September.

There have been several events over the past few months in support of the Project. The first was a splendid dinner which to celebrate the successful completion of the project. It was a relaxed affair held at the Senior Staff Mess at the Royal Military College in Kingston, and it was well attended.



Teacher Francine LeBlanc, Colonel Chris Hadfield, HCol Art Jordan, COS Warren Everett, Susan Everett (Hill 70 Director of Education), Richard Wong, the Honorable Pauline Browes, PC, Nancy Sproule at the Victory Dinner at RMC in September.

Purchase of Hill 70 Victoria Cross.

In the autumn I got a call from the acting Director General of the Canadian War Museum, Jim Whitham, who asked for help in keeping a Hill 70 VC medal from being sold at auction and going abroad. We had no budget for such a purchase though it did fall within the terms of our Charitable Charter, but Jim offered in return a permanent display in the Museum dedicated to Hill 70. The Hill 70 Board assessed that this would be very advantageous to the Education Plan, but that new funds would be required. At that point we approached one of our founding donors, Sir Cyril Woods, Baron of Slane. He was born in Northern Ireland in the same county as the VC recipient, Robert Hanna. Cyril and his wife Lorna immediately saw the value of keeping the medal in Canada and in the War Museum. He agreed to provide the entire amount that Jim Whitham had asked for, and the medal was successfully purchased for the benefit of all Canadians' posterity. It was received in November and the permanent

display was opened in the Legion Hall of Honour in March 2019.



Director General of the Canadian War Museum Jim Whitham, CEO of Canadian Museums Mark O'Neill, Cyril Woods, and Lorna Woods with the medal set of Robert Hill Hanna, VC.



Honorary Colonel Ted Hawthorne of the British Columbia Regiment which perpetuates the CEF Battalion of Robert Hill Hanna, VC presents a regimental coin to Cyril Woods

Construction

Our construction contractor EIFFAGE, has been very busy completing the phase 2 works. All of the elements on the site are unique and it creates a spectacular impression. Paul Fenton, our Project Manager in France has seen many construction sites, but he said when he walked up through the trench to the top and saw the expanse of the Memorial Park and the obelisk he found it so moving the hair on the nape of his neck stood up. That is the effect we sought.



A drone photograph of the construction of the Frederick Lee walkway, which has a trench and a bridge, thereby making it NATO's most expensive walkway! This allows the uphill gradient to satisfy disabled access to the obelisk.

Loos-en-Gohelle have already noticed an increase in visitor traffic. It seems they were right to insist on a multi bus parking lot. This monument is bound to have a positive effect on tourism revenue for the municipality. Note that you can now clearly see the site on Google Earth.

HILL 70 BEER

The 4 degrees brewery of Smiths Falls have produced a Belgian Blonde ale which has the Hill 70 label on it and have donated royalties to the Hill 7 Memorial project. It is titled 'Sir Arthur Curries Choice' and appropriately contains 7.0 % alcohol by volume, so ...no driving afterwards!



Warren Everett (H70 Project Chief of Staff) receives a cheque from the gentlemen of the 4 Degrees Brewing Company in Smiths Falls, Ontario.

Stained Glass Window

The project Chief of Staff Warren Everett conceived the idea of placing a stained-glass window of the project into St Georges Cathedral in Kingston dedicated to the soldiers of Kingston who fought and died at Hill 70. This will be a lasting legacy to the memory of the Battle of Hill 70. It has been very well received and he has already received several pledges from members of the congregation toward the \$20,000 necessary to do the job. He thought this photo below of God's own rainbow would be appropriate as a basis of the window.



(Photo courtesy of our man on the ground in Loos en Gohelle, M Gilles Payen, who is also the leader of the local historical Group- Sur les traces de la Grand Guerre, and curator of the Loos museum).

Display on Hill 70 in the Canadian War Museum

At the Canadian War Museum in February a new display was unveiled containing all six medal sets of the VC recipients from the Battle of Hill 70. To have a permanent display in Ottawa furthers the aims of the Hill 70 project since it will permit all Canadians visiting the Museum to see a substantive testament to the importance of the Battle of Hill 70 in Canada's history.



Pictured above are Natalia Manaeva (H70 stewardship officer), David Parker (H70 Treasurer), Joanne Sutherland, whose father was dangerously wounded at the Battle of Hill 70 in 1917, myself, and Susan Everett (H70 Education leader).



*The permanent display on Hill 70 in the Canadian War Museum
The Duke of Abercorn, John McDermott, General John de Chastelain, LCol (ret'd) Ike Kennedy, CEO of the Museums Mark O'Neill, Sir Cyril Woods, Mary Ann de Chastelain, Mark Hutchings*

The Loos British Cemetery – Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Re-interment service at the Loos Cemetery on August 23, 2018 for Private William Donegan, Private Henry Priddle, Private John Thomas, and Sergeant Archie Wilson who fought in the Battle of Hill 70.

Astonishingly, more than a century after it was established by Canadians, The Loos cemetery (which lies adjacent to our Memorial) continues to receive the remains of our war dead. With almost half of those killed in the Battle of Hill 70 having no known grave, these men are now slowly being found across this former battlefield as new construction uncovers their last resting places. Nor is this uncommon. It is estimated that as many as 20,000 Canadians were quite literally ‘lost’ during the battles of the First World War. As detailed in Roy MacGregor’s excellent Globe & Mail article from last August, these lost men undergo a meticulous DNA analysis when found, a process that is currently being spearheaded by forensic anthropologist Sarah Lockyer from DND’s Directorate of History and Heritage. With the remains of more than 20 other Canadians awaiting identification from the Loos area alone, one can expect more such ceremonies in future. Our Memorial will therefore serve as a most fitting backdrop to these solemn occasions.



The Hill 70 Monument as seen from The Loos Cemetery

Audio Tour/ Education

Our education team leader, Susan Everett tells me that the new graphic novel about Frederick Lee will be printed this week and distributed to over 3500 schools across Canada by September. We are grateful to Jack Gin for funding the creation and distribution of this novel.

After a long winter of writing and creativity the format and data of the Hill 70 site Audio Tour is now in the hands of the APP developers. Visitors in future will be able to use their own smart phone or iPad to listen to a series of Vignettes about the battle and the site. We are delighted with the well-known Canadians who lent their voices to the recording: narration by Dan Ackroyd and Bernard Derome. Gen. John de Chastelain speaks for Sir Arthur Currie, and LGen. Andy Leslie read the script of his own grandfather who commanded the Counter-Battery Artillery at Hill 70 one hundred years ago. Youthful soldiers' voices will be read by RMC cadets, and some very poignant letters home from the front will be read by the granddaughter of the author, Lana Lockyer. This particular high-tech, education initiative is made possible by a gift from Richard Wong.

Frederick Lee Update

Jack Gin completed an expedition this week to Kamloops, the home of the Rocky Mountain Rangers. Like many Canadian militia units in 1914 the Rangers sent thousands of men to fight in France in numbered Battalions. Often these Battalions were broken up and fed in as replacements to reinforce units already serving in the Canadian Corps at the front. The 172nd Bn is one, and it is now perpetuated by the Rangers. There was a Canadian born man of Chinese origin, Frederick Lee, who was killed at Hill 70, and this sacrifice is a perfect reminder that the Canadian Corps was made up of immigrant men from over 25 countries. Canada was both diverse and inclusive even one hundred years ago. One walkway is named for Frederick Lee, and an adjacent plaza is named for the Rocky Mountain Rangers, made possible by a generous gift from Mr. Sylvester Chuang of Toronto



Jack Gin is presented with Commanding Officer's Coin of the Rocky Mountain Rangers and made an honorary Ranger by CO Lieutenant-Colonel A.G. (Ammo) Vecchio in Kamloops last week.

Completion Ceremonies.

We have raised sufficient funds to complete the final stages of construction. On 2 October in Loos en Gohelle we will conduct the Completion Ceremony to honour the Canadian soldiers who fought at Hill 70 and to thank the donors and workers who have made the monument's creation possible.

The Somme Battlefield Pipe Band will join us again to provide the music. Warren will have his own Airforce to coordinate in the form of vintage aeroplanes of the Great War who will fly over prior to the Completion ceremony. The Commander of the Canadian Army, Lt Gen Jean Marc Lanthier has agreed to be the reviewing officer.

Conclusion

We have already begun planning the termination phase of the project and negotiations are well along to ensure the Memorial Park in Loos en Gohelle is kept in pristine condition in perpetuity.

All the funds we have raised to date are from private citizens; though we have approached the federal Government there is no indication to date that they may be considering a donation. Remaining to be funded is the long-term maintenance of the project; two options being addressed and worked on. We are getting excellent cooperation from the Loos-en-Gohelle municipality and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

We are still short about \$300k to pay for this long-term maintenance in perpetuity. So fundraising continues apace. Any ideas you may have for this final stretch will be gratefully received.

Many thanks for your continuing support.

Sincerely,



Mark Hutchings,
Chairman,
The Hill 70 Memorial Project

P.S.

If you are interested in going to the ceremony in France on 2 October 2019 please inform our attendance OPI, James Ostler so we will be able to plan for your participation. Here are some contacts for you:

1. HOTEL- Lensotel- Clément- contact@lensotel.com, Address: Rue des Canadiens, Centre Commercial Lens 62880 Vendin-le-Vieil, France Phone: +33 3 21 79 36 36
2. Travel Agent- Norm Payne, normanp@premieregroup.com, phone:(613) 288-0034, (613) 523 3278
3. Attendance Coordinator- James Ostler, dbd@thecommissionaires.com