



Pacific Coast Branch

The Great War – 1914-1919

Remembering – Honouring – Learning



2024 Branch Seminar Program

1, 2, and 3 March 2024

Canadian Scottish Regiment (Princess Mary's) Officers' Mess, Bay Street Armoury,
Victoria, BC, Canada

Friday, March 1 – Evening

18:00—21:30 Check-in, Social Gathering, Silent Auction Setup // Collectors Showcase
(For information about Collectors Showcase contact Roger McGuire at xcv@telus.net)

19:00—20:20 Film, “Ways We Remember War”, Armoury Room 222
Dr Geoff Bird

Saturday, March 4 – Day

08:00 – 08:45 Check-in // Coffee & Tea

08:45 – 09:00 Introductions & Announcements

09:00 – 09:50 *The Forgotten General: The Life of Sir Percy Lake*
Scott Osborne

09:50 – 10:40 *The Meaning of Death Redefined: Fascist Theology Revealed at Redipuglia*
Mark McLain

10:40 – 10:50 [*Stretch Break*](#)

10:50 – 11:40 *The Canadian Army Veterinary Corps*
Yvonne Van Ruskenveld

11:40 – 12:20 *Voices From the Past: First World War Collections at UVic's Special Collections & University Archives*
Lara Wilson

12:20 – 13:50 [*Lunch Break*](#)

13:50 – 14:40 ***“If All the Officers Were Shot”: The Importance of the First Contingent Commanders to the CEF***
Bill Stewart

14:40 – 15:30 ***Keep Punching: The Three Lives of Red Dutton***
Susan Raby-Dunne

15:30 – 15:40 ***Stretch Break***

15:40 – 16:30 ***Gallipoli Reconsidered***
David Jackson

Saturday, March 4 – Evening

Mess Dinner: Jackets and ties or mess-kit for gentlemen, suits or dresses for ladies

18:00 – 18:50 **Cocktails and Silent Auction**

19:00 – 21:00 **Dinner // Keynote Speaker: Barry Gough: “Premier Richard McBride’s Submarines: Meeting Perilous Times”**

21:00 – **Socializing in mess bar**



Sunday, March 5 – Morning

08:00 – 08:30 **Coffee & tea // Silent Auction conclusion, payment & pickup**

08:30 – 09:10 ***Annual General Meeting***

09:10 – 10:00 ***In the Footsteps of Heroes: The Royal Canadian Legion Foundation’s 1936 Pilgrimage of Remembrance***

William Stewart

10:00 – 10:10 ***Stretch Break***

10:10 – 11:00 **The American Battlefields Monuments Commission**
Mark McLain

11:00 – 12:10 **Video: Mark Connelly’s “Official War Photography and Public Perception of the War”, Armoury Room 222**

John Azar

12:10 – 12:40 Farewells

12:40 Group tidying

2024 Seminar Presentations & Speaker Bios

Film, *Ways We Remember War: The Second Battle of Ypres and Canada's Memory*, a 70-minute documentary written, directed and produced by Dr Geoffrey Bird.

Canada's first battle of the First World War occurred in a small wooded area in the middle of the night at a place called Kitcheners' Wood. In response to the first use of chlorine gas in warfare, the battle marked the beginning of the Second Battle of Ypres. Without film or photographs, Canada's memory of the battle is shaped by art, memorials and pilgrimage to the battlefield itself. Working with The Canadian Scottish Regiment, The Calgary Highlanders, residents of Flanders, historians, curators and landscape artists, this film explores the power of place and the significance of Flanders in shaping Canadian war remembrance.

Dr. Geoffrey Bird is an anthropologist and professor at Royal Roads University. In 2015, Geoff launched the War Heritage Research Initiative, dedicated to public education through free short films focused on sites of war memory and their storytellers. He has written, directed, and produced over 30 short films. His prior career included working overseas in Vietnam and Malaysia, serving as an officer in the naval reserve, and working as a guide at Vimy Ridge. In May, he returns to Ypres to complete filming of a new documentary, entitled *Ways Wars Remember War*.

The Forgotten General: The Life of Sir Percy Lake

On 20th November 1940 a huge military funeral was held in Victoria. The subject was Sir Percy Lake, a man completely forgotten today, but in 1940 one of the most well-known and prominent citizens of Victoria. Who was this man, and why was he held in such high esteem justifying a funeral with full military honours?

Scott Osborne is a retired Army officer who served 33 years in the Royal Canadian Artillery across Canada. Scott deployed to Oka in 1990, and served with the UN in Sierra Leone, the Golan Heights and NATO in Afghanistan. He was an Instructor-in-Gunnery at the Field Artillery School and has received Commander's Commendations at Army, Division and Brigade level. Scott was with 'W' Battery at Oka, which received a Unit Commendation from the Chief of the Defence Staff. Scott is President of the Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver Island, which promotes the public discussion of national defence issues.

The Meaning of Death Redefined: Fascist Theology Revealed at Redipuglia

Different countries remembered ultimate sacrifices in various manners following the end of the Great War. For Italy, death's meaning changed hand-in-hand with new interpretations provided by fascism and Benito Mussolini, on display at the gigantic ossuary at Redipuglia.

A retired optometrist, **Mark McLain** worked most of his career with the Kaiser Permanente HMO in Portland. He has also served in 120 voluntary eye clinics in fifteen different countries with the Lions Club. Undergraduate degree from Oregon State, professional degree from Southern California. While serving as a young captain—later major—he visited the beautiful, empty vast Meuse-Argonne ABMC Cemetery near Verdun beginning a long interest in

the history of the war visiting sites from Islay in Scotland through France to the Julian Alps of Slovenia.

The Canadian Army Veterinary Corps (CAVC)

Horses (and other animals) were vital in the Great War — both at the front and in support behind the lines. This presentation will describe how the men of CAVC managed to keep Canadian animals moving despite difficult conditions for both man and beast.

Yvonne Van Ruskenveld is a long-time member of the Pacific Coast Branch of the Western Front Association. She is especially interested in the experiences of those who served (both humans and animals) in the Great War. She has made several other presentations at the annual seminar on topics that include prisoners of war, nursing sisters, the cyclist corps, and convalescent hospitals. She is also a member of the Old Cemeteries Society of Victoria (for which she develops and presents walking tours) and the Victoria Historical Society.

Voices from the Past: the First World War collections at UVic's Special Collections & University Archives

Lara will provide an overview of UVic's First World War archival collections and discuss common questions about The University's holdings and how to care for archival collections.

Lara Wilson is the director of special collections and the university archivist at the University of Victoria, where she has worked since 2001.

"If All the Officers Were First Shot:" The Importance of the First Contingent Commanders to the CEF

Despite scathing comments on their suitability, the senior combat commanders of the First Contingent were critical to the CEF's success. This study provides a group biography discussing their backgrounds, experience, career trajectories and importance to the CEF's development. It also highlights officers who represented the larger themes in the presentation.

Bill Stewart earned his PhD from the University of Birmingham (UK) in 2012, after a thirty-year career in senior management positions in high tech. His research focus is on the tactics, operations, and administration of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. He has published two books, *The Embattled General: Sir Richard Turner and the First World War* and *Somme 1916: The Neglected Campaign*, with a third on Second Arras to be published shortly. In addition, he has written multiple articles and chapters. He lives in Ladysmith BC.

Keep Punching: The Three Lives of Red Dutton

This presentation explores Dutton's experience as a Stretcher Bearer in the Great War, and the catastrophic wounds that almost finished him as an athlete. Herculean efforts to recover his fitness led him to a career in the National Hockey League and ultimately President of the NHL. It will also touch on his "last life" as a construction tycoon.

Susan Raby-Dunne is a military historian, WWI and WWII battlefield guide in Europe, and the author of several books of military history including *Bonfire—The Chestnut Gentleman* ©2012 MMWG, *John McCrae: Beyond Flanders Fields* ©2016 Heritage House (nominated for a 2018 Golden Oak Award), author/editor of *Morrison: The Long Lost Memoir of Canada's Artillery Commander in the Great War* ©2017 Heritage House.

Currently, Susan is a guide at Government House in Victoria. After four decades plus of international motorcycle touring, she has traded in her BMW for a 34-foot ocean cruiser where she now resides in Victoria, British Columbia.

Gallipoli Reconsidered

This presentation will address these questions:

- o Why did German diplomacy succeed in getting Turkey on their side and British diplomacy fail?
- o Why did Britain think that a purely Naval campaign would end in the surrender of Turkey?
- o Why were preparations so rushed?
- o Why was reconnaissance, logistic support, and artillery so limited?
- o Why did the Turks succeed when the allied armies failed?
- o What impact did this have on the western front?
- o Why is the campaign so memorialized in Australia and NZ when it was a failure compared to our own celebration of victory at Vimy?

David Jackson was born in the UK and emigrated to attend the University of Victoria. He had a 37-year career as Hydrographic Surveyor with Fisheries and Oceans Canada. He served ten years as a reserve artillery officer based at the Bay Street Armoury. David is now retired and volunteering at the BC Aviation Museum and Ashton Armouries Museum. He has a life-long interest in military history and visits European battlefields annually.

Premier Richard McBride's Submarines: Meeting Perilous Times, August 1914

In 1914 Premier Richard McBride purchased two submarines from the Electric Boat Company of Seattle. They were delivered under suspicion and secrecy on the eve of the outbreak of war. This talk deals with McBride's initiatives, also his connections with Winston Churchill (First Lord of the Admiralty), Prime Minister of Canada Robert Borden, and others. The subs were based in Esquimalt, and later deployed to Halifax. This is a story of intrigue, political opportunism, political backbiting, and Ottawa's confusion about the defence of Canada and seaborne trade at the opening and in the early years of the Great War.

Barry Gough, PhD, DLit, LLD, was born in Victoria in 1938 and educated at Victoria High School. His father was School Superintendent and his mother a noted pianist. At Kings College London he trained as an imperial/naval historian when empire was in dispute and navies not an academic subject. He reestablished the significance of these subjects in Canada with his book on the Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast, still in print. He became Professor at Wilfrid Laurier University, retiring in 2004. His opus consists of 22 books, most recently the first biography of Governor Blanshard of Vancouver Island.

In the Footsteps of Heroes: The Royal Canadian Legion Foundation's Pilgrimage of Remembrance

In the summer of 1936 the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League, the precursor of the Royal Canadian Legion, organized the first "official pilgrimage to Vimy and the Battlefields" for Canadians. More than 6200 Canadian veterans and their families made their way to Europe. There would be no more Legion Pilgrimages until 1989 when a contingent of Second World War veterans resurrected the Pilgrimage concept and returned to Northwest Europe. Today, the Royal Canadian Legion Foundation's Pilgrimage of Remembrance evokes the

spirit of earlier journeys and brings Canadians from across the country, the children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren of those who “went over” to experience the sites of memory, significance, and sacrifice from the Great War and the Second World War.

John Goheen has served as the guide and historian for the Royal Canadian Legion’s Pilgrimage of Remembrance since 1997. In the early days of the pilgrimage program, most of the participants were Second World War veterans keen to see where their fathers fought in the Great War. Today’s participants often include their descendants who want to walk in “their footsteps” – the footsteps of heroes. For his service John has been awarded the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers, the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation, and the Royal Canadian Legion’s Meritorious Service Medal.

Official War Photography and Public Perceptions of the War

A video presentation of a talk by Prof Mark Connelly explores the work of the key photographers on the Western Front, the different attitudes of the imperial governments and the effects on the viewing public. Further, it will show that the old cliché that the home front did not understand the actual conditions in the trenches is a myth. The war could be seen even if it was in a highly controlled manner. The role of Sir Max Aitken (Lord Beaverbrook) as the "Great Impresario" is featured in the presentation.

Mark Connelly is Head of the School of History at the University of Kent in Canterbury, England. He has a broad interest in modern military history, culture and society and is particularly interested in the commemoration of the two world wars. A list of his articles and books can be found at: www.kent.ac.uk/history/people/389/connelly-mark

John Azar is the past-chair and a past vice-chair of the Pacific Coast Branch. John has a strong interest in military history, commemoration and telling the stories of those who served.