



Official Canadian War Photograph of wounded Rfn. Al Jesson with a Canadian war correspondent taking notes following the battle at Carpique (1944). (RWpgRif Museum RG 1.6 Box 7 Cliff Chadderton Fonds)

The Royal Winnipeg Rifles Museum & Archives

## Web Resources for the Researcher



# Preamble

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Are you interested in tracing a rifleman's history? Learning more about The Royal Winnipeg Rifles' history? The purpose of this guide is to connect the user to a variety of **web resources** that document Canadian soldiers' wartime experiences and service.

This guide contains brief wartime backgrounders or contexts about the types of records and resources one can expect to encounter during the research process, from a soldier's service records, death records, awards and honours, gravesites and memorials, to unit histories, war diaries and battle honours. An annotated list of web links is provided at the end of this guide.

The Royal Winnipeg Rifles' **Official Lineage** through the Directorate of History and Heritage provides a concise, footnoted overview of the unit's history in terms of heraldry, marches, mottoes, battle honours, lineage (including perpetuated battalions), and operational history.



Official badge of The Royal Winnipeg Rifles  
Source: Directorate of History and Heritage



## DEVIL IN THE DETAIL:

A common military tradition is for military units/organizations to carry colours, standards, or guidons (pennants) that list their battle honours. Rifle units, however, do not traditionally have colours, therefore, their cap badge may list the regimental honours. Another common element of rifle regiment cap badges: the Maltese Cross.

# 1885 Campaign

The 90<sup>th</sup> “Winnipeg” Battalion of Rifles was mobilized for active service on 1885 April 10. The 90<sup>th</sup> Battalion served as part of General Middleton’s Column of the **North West Field Force**, the Canadian government’s army raised to fight the armed force of Métis and their First Nations allies. The Battalion was removed from active service on 1885 September 18.

The 1885 Campaign, also known as the 1885 Rebellion/Resistance, Red River Resistance, North West Rebellion/Resistance, to name a few (depending upon the bias, loyalty, or opinion of the user), is where The Royal Winnipeg Rifles can trace their early traditions. It was during the Battle of Fish Creek that the riflemen in their dark green coats earned the moniker “Little Black Devils” (LBD) and the motto “*Hosti Acie Nominati*” (*transl.* Named by the Enemy). The 1885 campaign was where the LBD earned their first battle honours (Batoche, Fish Creek, Northwest Canada 1885) and composed their regimental song “Pork, Beans, and Hardtack.”

The Library and Archives Canada (LAC) is the official archival repository for the Government of Canada and its institutions; Canadian militia records are housed there and many records are digitized and freely available.



Colour Sergeant E.K. Campbell, c.1885  
(RWpgRif Museum RG 1.2.2 Box 2)



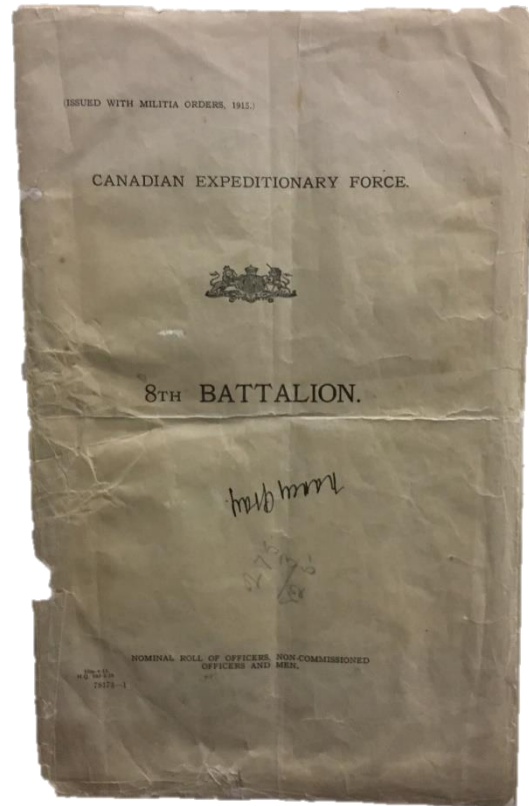
## DEVIL IN THE DETAIL:

During the 1885 Rebellion, the 90<sup>th</sup> Battalion had their own newspapermen attached to their unit who would relay, via telegraph, daily accounts. These (albeit biased) reports can be found in the *Manitoba Free Press* and *Winnipeg Tribune*. The souvenir edition of the *Canadian Illustrated War Pictorial* contains the complete nominal roll for the 1885 North West Campaign.

# First World War

When war was declared between Britain and Germany in 1914, men rushed to enlist with the newly formed **Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF)**, the army raised by Canada to serve overseas with Britain. The CEF consisted of fighting arms (i.e., combat arms) and non-fighting arms (i.e., support arms). The fighting arms included artillery, cavalry, engineering, infantry, machine gun, and tank units. The support arms consisted of army service, dental, forestry, labour, medical, ordnance, pay, railway, veterinary corps, etc.

**Nominal rolls** were compiled for the various CEF units; for a fighting unit/battalion, the nominal roll was published prior to the unit's departure for overseas. The nominal roll contained a list of the officers, non-commissioned officers (NCOs), and other ranks that enlisted with the unit. Particulars such as soldier's regimental number rank, name, former military service, next of kin, address of next of kin, birthplace, and place of enlistment were also included. Some of the nominal rolls were further organized into companies and sections (e.g., machine gun section, transport section, etc.)

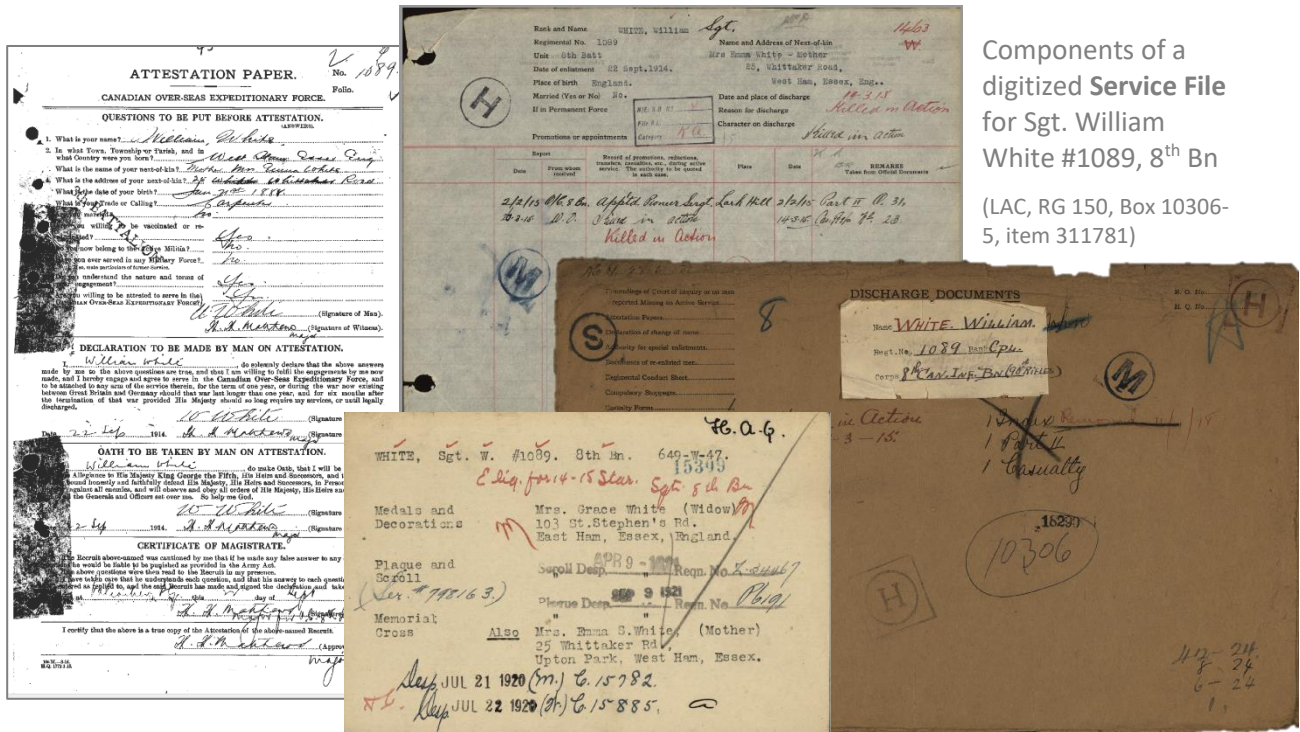


CEF 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Nominal Roll (1915)  
(RWpgRif Museum RG 1.3.1 Box 1, File 8)



## DEVIL IN THE DETAIL:

The 90<sup>th</sup> Winnipeg Rifles (Little Black Devils) raised five CEF infantry battalions (Bn): **8<sup>th</sup> Bn**, **90<sup>th</sup> Bn** (2<sup>nd</sup> Draft), **144<sup>th</sup> Bn** (3<sup>rd</sup> Draft), **190<sup>th</sup> Bn** (4<sup>th</sup> Draft), and **203<sup>rd</sup> Bn** (5<sup>th</sup> Draft). The 8<sup>th</sup> Bn was the first and only LBD unit sent to fight on the Front.



Components of a digitized Service File for Sgt. William White #1089, 8<sup>th</sup> Bn

(LAC, RG 150, Box 10306-5, item 311781)

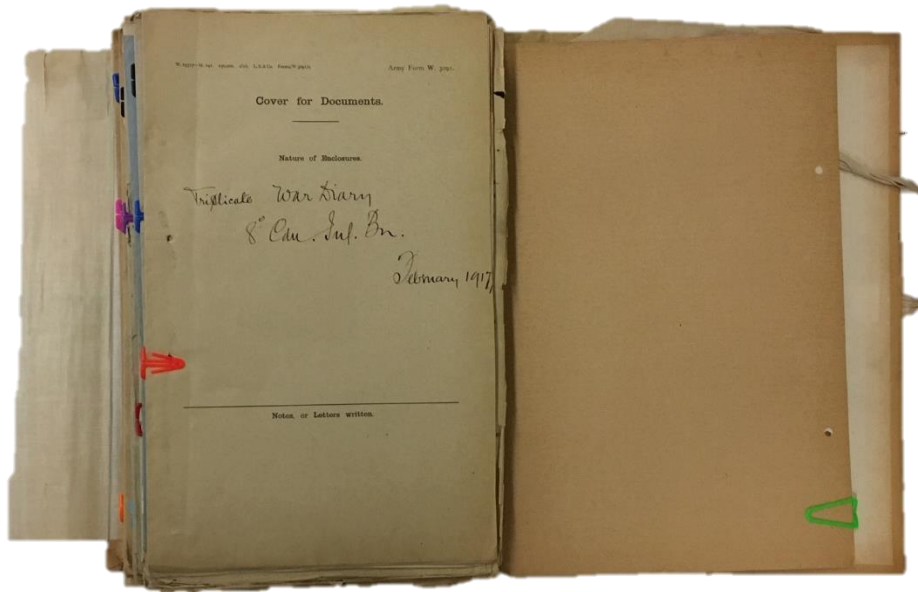
Soldiers who served with the CEF will have a **service file**. These files have been digitized by the Library and Archives Canada (LAC). Service records are searchable under the LAC's online database: **Personnel Records of the First World War**. Service files will contain the enlistee's **Attestation Paper** or **Officer's Declaration**, **Casualty Form – Active Service**, as well as potentially other documents including discharge certificates, index cards, medal cards, medical cards or sheets, pay sheets and separation allowances.

To help users interpret CEF service files, the LAC has produced a number of guides and references, including: how to read **Records of Service or Casualty Forms**, **Memorial Cross cards**, and **Medal Cards**, and how to interpret **military abbreviations**.

In addition to soldiers' service files, the LAC houses many **record groups** (RG) pertaining to military units and organizations. The LAC has produced **thematic guides** that help identify LAC records pertinent to each CEF unit.

CEF units contained daily accounts of their "Actions in the Field" in a log known known as a **War Diary**. The **LAC War Diaries of the First World War Database** contains the digitized War Diaries of all CEF units. In the

case of Infantry Diaries, each battalion was responsible for recording field activities from an administrative and operation standpoint; references to individual soldiers were rare. The War Diary will contain a “first-hand record” of where the unit was deployed throughout the course of the war. The level of detail and description for each battalion will vary depending on the officer tasked with maintaining the log. The LAC provides detailed steps on how to search for and interpret content in War Diaries



Triplicate copy of  
**War Diary**, 8<sup>th</sup>  
Canadian Infantry  
Battalion.

(RWpgRif Museum  
RG 1.3.1 Box 2)



#### **DEVIL IN THE DETAIL:**

Only a fraction of the 260 CEF infantry battalions served directly at The Front. Upon their arrival in England, battalions were primarily absorbed into a reserve battalion, which then fed troops to other Canadian units on the front. The LBD draft battalions were absorbed into the **11<sup>th</sup> Reserve** and **18<sup>th</sup> Reserve Battalions**.

The LAC has also compiled a **First World War section** detailing other LAC sources about the Army, Air Force, Navy, nurses, other records, published sources, and external links – all of which can be accessed through the **LAC’s military heritage portal**.

# Second World War

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Canadian privacy legislation restricts access to Second World War service files. Searchable database and indexes for all those who have served are not publically accessible. Some records for those who died in service are available and searchable through the **LAC's Service files of the Second World War War Dead 1939-1947 database**.

**War diaries** for respective Second World War Units are also available through the LAC. These logs will contain information on locations of overseas postings and battles.

Official Canadian War Photograph RWpgRif in landing assault craft bound for Juno Beach, Normandy, France, June 6, 1944



# War Dead

## First World War

Details about a soldier's death may be found in three additional sets of First World War records housed at the LAC: 1) Circumstances of Death Registers, 2) Commonwealth Grave Registers, and 3) Veterans Death Cards or Form Records.

**Circumstances of Death Registers** contain information regarding a soldier's death and primary burial site. Unfortunately, death registers for the names beginning with "Sip" to Z are missing.

Graves for CEF members who died in Belgium, France, and the United Kingdom have been recorded in the **Imperial/ Commonwealth War Graves Register**. LAC Archivists believe these records were compiled after the war from information in the circumstances of death registers and service files. These grave registry forms differ from those posted on the CWCG web site.

If Veterans Affairs Canada was notified about a First World War Veteran's death, a **Death Card** was created. These cards were often stamped "Form Records" because they were once stored at a federal Experimental Farm. Roughly 130,000 index cards were created by Veterans Affairs who recorded deaths up to the 1960s on these cards.

**Circumstances of Death Register for Major Bawden #1, 8<sup>th</sup> Bn CEF**  
(LAC RG 150, Vol. 31829 B016716 page 963)

**Commonwealth War Grave Register for Sgt. William White #1089, 8<sup>th</sup> Bn CEF**  
(LAC RG 150, Vol. 31830 B016654 page 279)

**Veterans Death Card for Pte. George Adams #1121, 8<sup>th</sup> Bn CEF**  
(LAC Mikan 461114 page 296)





## Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)

Established in 1917, the **Imperial War Graves Commission**, later the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)**, was tasked with recording details of the war dead, securing and maintaining land for cemeteries and memorials, and perpetually commemorating those who died while serving Commonwealth forces in theatres of war.

The CWGC website contains comprehensive information about the CWGC's activities, history and archives, including databases searchable by cemetery or by individual. Many documents have been digitized and may available for download, including: Grave Registration Documents, Grave Registration Reports, Registers, Alternative Commemoration Documents, Burial Returns, Exhumation Reports, Headstone Schedules, Panel Lists, etc.

**Rue-David Military Cemetery, Fleurbaix, Pas de Calais France:**  
Final resting place of Sgt. William White #1089, 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, CEF  
(Source: Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 2019)



### **DEVIL IN THE DETAIL:**

At this time (2019), it is not possible to search the CVWM or CWGC by CEF battalion number (e.g. 8<sup>th</sup> Bn). Researchers searching for soldiers by name should consider variations in spelling.

## Canadian Military Memorials Database

The **Canadian Military Memorials Database** is maintained by Veterans Affairs Canada and contains more than 7500 memorials and monuments located in communities throughout Canada. The site is regularly updated as contributors provide information about monuments sites. The database is searchable by province/territory, municipality, and keyword.

## War Memorials in Manitoba

The **Manitoba Historical Society (MHS)** has compiled a comprehensive inventory of military monuments in Manitoba under their feature webpage: **War Memorials in Manitoba**. In this web feature, the MHS has provided a **Monument Search Tool** that allows users to search MHS webpages for the names of service members that appear on Manitoba military monuments. Names that do not appear on any monument/memorial in Manitoba have been amassed in **Manitoba's Virtual War Memorial**, a virtual list curated by researchers of the MHS. The MHS also hosts links to Patrick Morican's report *War Memorials in Manitoba, An Artistic Legacy (2013)*, that contains a review of the history and heritage of more than 200 Manitoba war memorials.



**44th Battalion Monument** in Vimy Park, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. This monument was originally located on “The Pimple” in Vimy, France and was relocated to Winnipeg once construction started at the Vimy National Historic Site, France. The Royal Winnipeg Rifles perpetuated the 44th Bn CEF as of 1969.

(Photograph: S. Tsukamoto, November 2018)

# Military Medals, Honours, & Awards

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**Service (or campaign) medals** recognize a time and place of service. Depending on their terms of service, The Winnipeg Rifles were eligible for the Egypt Medal (1884), North West Canada Medal (1885), South Africa Campaign, 1914-1915 Star, British War Medal (1919), and the Victory Medal (1919). In the Second World War, The Royal Winnipeg Rifles may have received the 1939-1945 Star, Canadian Volunteer Service Medal, Defence Medal (1945), and France and Germany Star, and War Medal 1939-1945. In both theatres of war, **valour (or gallantry) decorations** could be awarded to individuals who demonstrated courage, such as the Victoria Cross (VC), Distinguished Service Order (DSO), Military Cross (MC), Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM), and Military Medal (MM). **Meritorious service decorations** were awarded for exemplary acts. **War Service Badges** or pins helped distinguished those who served once they had returned to civilian life.



First World War Medal Set for Pte. Thompson, #460196, 61<sup>st</sup> Bn (WLI), the most decorated private in the CEF (RWRM 17.10206)

The online **Veterans Affairs Canada Medals and Decorations Database** provides profiles for badges, medals and ribbons and includes context, eligibility and criteria, description, number issued, and other historical notes.

The **LAC Military Medals, Honours and Awards, 1812-1969 Database** contains records of citation cards, medal registers, and other records of military awards that is searchable by recipient. For recipients of First World War valour decorations, the **London Gazette (LG)** often published particulars about a soldier's commendations. This formal announcement was known as being "gazetted" and served as an official record.



## **DEVIL IN THE DETAIL:**

Searches in the LAC Military Medal Database cannot be separated by First and Second World War, nor can the database be searched by CEF Battalion (e.g. 8<sup>th</sup> Bn).



# Useful Websites

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The website links below are organized by topic as presented in this User Guide. Titles **highlighted in yellow** serve to emphasize commonly utilized resources.

## OFFICIAL HISTORIES

### Official Histories

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/military-history/history-heritage/official-military-history-lineages/official-histories.html>

- This webpage contains links to official histories vetted for accuracy by The Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH), National Defence. These histories are considered true accountings of Canadian military events.

### Official Lineages

<http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhh-dhp/his/ol-lo/index-eng.asp>

- The Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH), National Defence, annotated reference/"official" lineage for every authorized Canadian unit formed since 1885.

### Royal Winnipeg Rifles Official Lineage

<http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhh-dhp/his/ol-lo/vol-tom-3/par2/rwr-eng.asp>

- The website is the DHH official lineage for the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, and includes: badge description and symbolism, motto, marches, alliances, battle honours, lineage notes (including perpetuated units), operational histories.

### Guide to Sources Relating to the Canadian Militia (Infantry, Cavalry, Armored)

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/Pages/guide-sources-canadian-militia.aspx>

- This thematic guide produced by the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) contains a listing of the LAC records and files pertaining to the various Canadian Militia units. Records pertaining to the Royal Winnipeg Rifles can be found pages 902-909.

## **LAC Military History Portal**

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/Pages/military-heritage.aspx>

- The LAC's Military Heritage web portal is the launch point for Canadian military history spanning from the establishment of New France to the Second World War. Information and resources have been organized according to major conflict periods.

## **1885 CAMPAIGN**

### **1885 Nominal Roll**

<http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/newspapers/IWN/1885/08/01/1/>

- Hosted by the University of Alberta, the "Peel's Prairie Provinces" is a research website dedicated to western Canadian history
- The August 1, 1885 souvenir edition of the *Canadian Illustrated War News* contains the complete nominal roll for all Canadian military units which fought in the 1885 Campaign. The 90<sup>th</sup> Regiment nominal roll can be found on pages 12 and 13 of this publication.

### **Library and Archives Canada (LAC) – Louis Riel Thematic Guide**

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/metis/Pages/thematic-guide-louis-riel.aspx>

- This thematic guide consists of a listing of specific LAC archival references/records pertaining to Louis Riel and the Metis uprisings of 1869/70 and 1885. Some records have been digitized and hosted through the Heritage Canadiana website.

### **List of officers and militia men killed and wounded in the North West Rebellion**

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/Pages/confederation-1914.aspx#f>

- This Library and Archives Canada (LAC) webpage contains a list of the casualties recorded in the *1885 Annual Report of the Department of Militia and Defence*.

### **Department of Militia and Defence: Records Relating to the North West Rebellion, 1880-1885**

[http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac\\_mikan\\_194846?usrlang=en](http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_mikan_194846?usrlang=en)

- These digitized records from the LAC consist more than 3500 pages of telegrams relating to supplies, transport, troop movements, as well as abstracts, statements and accounts, letterbooks, teamster and paymaster accounts.

### **Department of Militia and Defence: Special Forces Nominal Rolls and Paylists**

[http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac\\_mikan\\_194988](http://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_mikan_194988)

- In addition to Special Forces nominal rolls and paylists, the sub-series includes records relating to the following Forces and Contingents: Red River Force, 1870-1877; North West Field Force, 1885; South African Contingents, 1899-1902; and the Coronation Contingent, 1902.

## **FIRST WORLD WAR**

### **First World War Nominal Rolls**

<https://militaryandfamilyhistory.blog/2016/04/18/nominal-rolls-of-the-canadian-expeditionary-force/>

- Hosted by Steve Clifford, the “Doing Our Bit, Military and Family History” contains a comprehensive table of all the CEF units with links to the respective digitized nominal rolls.

### **How to read a record of service or casualty form**

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/Pages/read-service-record-casualty-form.aspx>

- This LAC website describes the components of each column on the record of service/casualty form found in CEF service files

### **Military Abbreviations Used in Service Files**

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/Pages/military-abbreviations.aspx>

- An LAC website containing alphabetized tables of military acronyms or abbreviations and their definitions

### **Personnel Records of the First World War/Attestation Papers**

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/search.aspx>



- This is the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) searchable online database for CEF service files.
- This LAC website informs the user on how to interpret what medals were issued to a soldier in the First World War

### **Sources Relating to Units of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF)**

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/Pages/units-canadian-expeditionary-force.aspx>

- These thematic guides produced by the LAC contains a listing of the LAC records and files pertaining to the various CEF units, including daily orders, diaries, personnel files, and private papers.

### **War Diaries of the First World War**

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/Pages/war-diaries.aspx>

- LAC database containing digitized War Diaries for CEF units. Step-by-step instructions are provided to help researchers access unit war diaries

## **SECOND WORLD WAR**

### **Service Files of the Second World War – War Dead, 1939-1947**

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/second-world-war/second-world-war-dead-1939-1947/Pages/files-second-war-dead.aspx>

- This is the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) searchable online database for Canadians who died in service. Portions of these records are digitized.

### **War Diaries of the Second World War (1939-1945)**

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/Pages/war-diaries-ship-logs-operations-records.aspx#c>

- Instructions on how to search the LAC database for digitized War Diaries of Second World War are provided in this link.

## **WAR DEAD**

### **Books of Remembrance**

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/books>

- This webpage, hosted by Veterans Affairs Canada, contains information about Canada's eight (8) Books of Remembrance housed at Parliament Hill and includes the history, display calendar and ceremonial procedures, and a searchable database.

### **Canadian Military Memorials Database**

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/national-inventory-canadian-memorials>

- Hosted by Veterans Affairs Canada, this website contains a database of memorials and monuments located in Canadian communities. Memorials are searchable by Province/Territory and Municipality.

### **Canadian Virtual War Memorial**

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial>

- An online registry hosted by Veterans Affairs Canada containing the names of service men and women who have died since Confederation. The names of the fallen are cross-linked with their entries in the Books of Remembrance.

### **Circumstances of Death Registers, First World War**

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/circumstances-death-registers/Pages/circumstances-death-registers.aspx>

- Digitized records for CEF individual soldiers who died in a theatre of war. Information on the circumstances of death and gravesite particulars are provided on a typed card.

### **Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)**

<https://www.cwgc.org/>

- Contains comprehensive information about the CWGC's activities, history and archives, including databases searchable by cemetery or by individual.

### **Commonwealth War Graves Registers, First World War**

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/commonwealth-war-graves-registers/Pages/commonwealth-war-graves-registers.aspx>

- Contains records digitized by the LAC of Commonwealth War Grave registry for graves of CEF soldiers in Belgium, France and the United Kingdom.

### **Farm Records/Veterans Death Cards: First World War**

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/veterans-death-cards-ww1/Pages/veterans-death-cards.aspx#d>

- Contains records digitized by the LAC of cards created by Veterans Affairs for First World War Veteran deaths.

### **War Memorials in Manitoba**

<http://mhs.mb.ca/docs/features/warmemorials/index.shtml>

- The Manitoba Historical Society (MHS) web feature dedicated to War memorials in Manitoba. This web page includes: a **Monument Search Tool** allowing users to search MHS webpages for names of service members that appear on Manitoba military monuments; a link to the **Manitoba's Virtual War Memorial**, a virtual list curated by researchers of the MHS for service members whose names are not listed on physical monuments; and Patrick Morican's report *War Memorials in Manitoba, An Artistic Legacy (2013)*, which contains a review of the history and heritage of more than 200 Manitoba war memorials.

## **MILITARY MEDALS AND DECORATIONS**

### **How to read a Memorial Cross Card (First World War)**

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/Pages/read-memorial-cross-card.aspx>

- This LAC website describes each field on a Memorial Cross index card

### **How to Read a Medal Card (First World War)**

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/Pages/read-medal-card.aspx>

### **London Gazette (LG)**

<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/awards-and-accreditation>

- The London Gazette contains an online database for First World War notices and includes videos, guides, and tips to assist searches.

### **Military Medals and Decorations**

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/medals-decorations>

- This Veterans Affairs Canada website contains a searchable table/database of military medals and awards issued to Canadian Soldiers or a civilian equivalent.
- Each medal will have a brief contextual background as well as information pertaining to eligibility and criteria, a physical description and picture of the medal, and historical notes including the approximate number that were issued.

### **Military Medals, Honours and Awards, 1812-1969**

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/military-medals-1812-1969/Pages/military-medals-honours-awards.aspx>

- This website contains the LAC's searchable database of medal registers, citation cards, and other military awards. Unfortunately, at this time database is not searchable by First or Second World War nor by CEF battalion.

## **OTHER WEB RESOURCES**

### **British & Commonwealth Military Insignia Database**

<https://www.britishbadgeforum.com/>

- Contains photographic examples of military badges and buttons of the British Empire and Commonwealth

### **Manitoba**

<https://digitalcollections.lib.umanitoba.ca/islandora/object/uofm:manitobia>

- The Manitoba Library Consortium's (MLC) Manitoba history resource web portal containing free access to digitized copies of newspapers, local histories, and other materials.

Compiled by the Volunteer Archivist  
The R Wpg Rif Museum & Archives  
[www.rwrmuseum.com](http://www.rwrmuseum.com)  
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