

Sur les traces du passé :

voix des Visites des champs de bataille Mottershead

Walking Through History:

Voices from the Mottershead Battlefield Tours



Rachel Girard

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**Peinture de couverture par**

**Cover painting by**

*Jissel Acevedo*



Ian & Rosemary Mottershead



Photographie prise par le maj John Keess durant la visite de M. Ian Mottershead au Collège militaire royal du Canada à Kingston le 10 septembre 2025.

Photograph taken by Maj John Keess during Mr. Ian Mottershead's visit to the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston on 10 September 2025.

## Foreword

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“Every Canadian should try to go on the battlefield tour”. I have heard comments like this multiple times from ex-Cadets and other participants in the battlefield tours.

My wife and I have provided funding for two annual RMC battlefield tours in perpetuity or until replaced by something more relevant. We are also funding half a dozen other extracurricular tours on a one-time trial basis. Many of these will be repeated and new ones developed.

The battlefield tours to France/ Belgium in February, and Italy in October, expose Cadets to some of the details of Canadian military history, including strategies, tactics, battlefield sites, cemeteries and memorials. The tours also develop an understanding of the fog of war and the importance of making necessary decisions with imperfect knowledge.

In a general sense, the tours should broaden Cadets’ horizons and expose them to new and unfamiliar aspects of life. We expect the tours will be effective in making them more worldly and adult.

As an ex-Cadet, I hope the tours lead participating Cadets to understand that they are part of a continuum of skilled military officers. The tours will undoubtedly stimulate them to understand that they are training to become thoughtful and disciplined Canadian officers who embody fighting spirit. Our country depends on them.

Finally, we hope the tours cause Cadets to feel proud to be Canadian and proud to be Canadian military officers.

Merci mille fois to the Professors who make the battlefield tours so meaningful.

*Ian Mottershead, 5586  
Class of 1962  
Vancouver, February 2026*

## Préface

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« Tous les Canadiens devraient tenter de participer à la visite des champs de bataille. » J’ai entendu des commentaires similaires à maintes reprises de la part d’anciens élèves-officiers et d’autres participants à ces voyages.

Mon épouse et moi avons fourni le financement pour deux visites annuelles des champs de bataille pour le CMR, et ce, à perpétuité ou jusqu’à ce qu’elles soient remplacées par un projet plus pertinent. Nous finançons également, à titre d’essai unique, une demi-douzaine d’autres excursions parascolaires. Bon nombre d’entre elles seront répétées et de nouvelles seront élaborées.

Les visites des champs de bataille en France et en Belgique, en février, et celle en Italie, en octobre, permettent aux élèves-officiers de découvrir certains détails de l’histoire militaire canadienne, notamment les stratégies, les tactiques, les lieux où se sont déroulés les combats, les cimetières et les monuments commémoratifs. Ces voyages favorisent également la compréhension du « brouillard de la guerre » et de l’importance de prendre les décisions nécessaires même lorsque l’information disponible est imparfaite.

Dans l’ensemble, ces visites devraient élargir les horizons des élèves-officiers et les exposer à des aspects nouveaux et méconnus de la vie. Nous espérons que ces voyages leur permettront de s’ouvrir sur le monde et de devenir plus matures.

En tant qu’ancien élève-officier, j’espère que ces voyages amèneront ceux qui y participent à réaliser qu’ils font partie d’un continuum d’officiers militaires qualifiés. Ces visites les inciteront sans doute à réaliser qu’ils s’entraînent pour devenir des officiers canadiens réfléchis et disciplinés qui incarnent l’esprit combatif. Notre pays compte sur eux.

Enfin, nous espérons que ces visites insuffleront aux élèves-officiers la fierté d’être non seulement Canadiens, mais aussi celle d’être des officiers militaires canadiens.

Merci mille fois aux professeurs qui rendent les visites des champs de bataille si significatives.

*Ian Mottershead, 5586  
Promotion de 1962  
Vancouver, février 2026*

## Introduction

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The study of military history is most powerful when it moves beyond the classroom and onto the ground where events actually occurred. The Royal Military College of Canada Mottershead Battlefield Tours were created to provide precisely this kind of experience: an opportunity for aspiring leaders to engage directly with the landscapes where Canadian soldiers fought and sacrificed. In doing so, participants deepen their understanding of the past while becoming more worldly, more knowledgeable, and more professional.

The materials in this volume were collected during the 2025 battlefield tours to France and Belgium, as well as to Italy. What makes this collection distinctive is not simply that it records a journey, but that it captures the personal responses of those who participated. Through reflections, artwork, stories, and poetry, contributors explore the meaning of the places they visited and the histories they encountered.

In France and Belgium, participants walked the fields and ridges that shaped the First World War and Canada's emergence on the world stage. They stood at Vimy Ridge and Passchendaele and looked across the ground where Canadian soldiers fought to capture. They walked through the preserved trenches at Beaumont Hamel. They reflected on the tragedy and heroism associated with the defence at St-Julien (Second Ypres) and the Dieppe Raid. They visited the D-Day Airborne bridgehead, Juno Beach, and the Falaise Gap. Along the way, they paused at cemeteries where thousands of soldiers rest, powerful reminders of the scale of sacrifice.

Italy presents a different landscape and a different story. The mountains, rivers, and historic towns remind us of the campaign's complexity and the endurance demanded of those who fought there. Participants visited the Liri Valley and Ortona and examined the battlefields along the Moro and Sangro Rivers. They also studied the Hitler, Gustav, and Gothic defensive lines, gaining insight into the terrain's challenges and the determination required to overcome them.

Standing on these battlefields reveals the scale and reality of war in ways no book alone can convey. The works in this volume show how such experiences inspire thoughtful and creative engagement with history and the profession of arms. Together, they demonstrate that remembrance and learning are inseparable, and that studying these places can profoundly shape how we understand leadership, sacrifice, and the past.

## Introduction

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L'étude de l'histoire militaire est des plus efficace lorsqu'elle se déplace sur les lieux mêmes où les événements se sont passés. Les Visites des champs de bataille Mottershead du Collège militaire royal du Canada existent précisément pour faire vivre cette expérience. C'est une occasion unique pour de futurs leaders de s'imprégner des lieux où des soldats canadiens ont combattu et donné leur vie. Par cette approche, les participants approfondissent leur compréhension du passé tout en acquérant une plus grande ouverture sur le monde, un bagage intellectuel et des connaissances enrichies en plus d'un professionnalisme affirmé.

Les œuvres présentées dans ce volume ont été recueillies à la suite des visites des champs de bataille en France, en Belgique ainsi qu'en Italie. Ce qui fait la singularité de cette collection n'est pas seulement qu'elle représente un périple, mais qu'elle saisit les impressions personnelles des individus qui y ont pris part. À travers des réflexions, des représentations artistiques, des récits et de la poésie, les participants explorent le sens des lieux visités et des histoires qu'ils y ont découvertes.

En France et en Belgique, les participants foulent les terres et les crêtes qui ont façonné le cours de la Première Guerre mondiale et l'émergence du Canada sur la scène mondiale. À la crête de Vimy et à Passchendaele, ils se tiennent là où les soldats canadiens ont combattu pour s'emparer du terrain. Ils arpentent les tranchées préservées de Beaumont-Hamel. Ils peuvent mesurer la portée de la tragédie et de l'héroïsme associés à la défense de Saint-Julien (deuxième bataille d'Ypres) et au raid de Dieppe. Ils visitent la tête de pont aéroportée du Jour J, la plage Juno et la poche de Falaise. En cours de route, ils explorent des cimetières où reposent des milliers de soldats, rappels poignants de l'ampleur des sacrifices consentis.

L'Italie présente une histoire et un paysage différents. Les montagnes, les rivières et les villes historiques nous rappellent la complexité de la campagne qui s'y est déroulée et l'endurance dont ont dû faire preuve les soldats qui y ont combattu. Les participants visitent la vallée de la Liri ainsi qu'Ortona en plus d'examiner les champs de bataille bordant les rivières Moro et Sangro. Ils étudient également les lignes défensives Hitler, Gustave et Gothique, ce qui leur permet de mieux comprendre les défis du terrain et la détermination nécessaire pour les surmonter.

Se tenir sur ces champs de bataille révèle l'ampleur et la réalité de la guerre d'une manière qu'aucun livre d'histoire ne peut exprimer à lui seul. Les œuvres dans ce volume témoignent comment de telles expériences suscitent un engagement réfléchi et créatif envers l'histoire et la profession des armes. Ensemble, ils montrent que le souvenir et l'apprentissage sont indissociables, et que l'étude de ces lieux peut profondément façonner notre compréhension du leadership, du sacrifice et du passé.



VCBM France et Belgique  
2024 et 2025

MBFT France and Belgium  
2024 and 2025

## Carrying Forward What They Left Behind

*Julia Clitheroe*

Visiting the Canadian First World War and Second World War battlefields and cemeteries in France and Belgium, I felt a profound sense of loss and gratitude. Each headstone whispered stories of sacrifice, reminding me of the freedoms we cherish, bought at a great price. The rows of white markers amidst the fields that once echoed with war stand as a testament to valour and peace. I think about each Canadian who died in war and who never had the opportunity to share their unique, horrifying experiences.

Feeling the weight of history, I was struck by the sacrifice of soldiers who were sons, fathers, and friends. Their bravery and ultimate sacrifice secured the peace and liberties I enjoy today. I remember that at Thiepval and Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, filled with the names of those who died in the Great War, my uncommon last name sharply stood out to me; it was “H. Clitheroe,” one of the family members that my grandmother told me to keep an eye out for on my trip to the Battlefields. Seeing the names of those who share the same blood as me evoked a profound connection to the sacrifice of those who fought, something that a history textbook would never be able to do. Amidst the solemn beauty of these sacred grounds, I felt a deep connection to our past and a renewed responsibility to honour their legacy by striving for peace.

This journey was a powerful reminder of the cost of peace and the resilience of the human spirit. It changed me, leaving a lasting impression of the importance of remembrance and the value of every life that contributed to the freedom we hold dear. With each step that I took on these grounds, I made a promise to keep the legacy and values of the heroes who fought and now rest in eternal sleep.

## Prayer for Remembrance

*Tristan Baller*

---

Lord,  
You give, and you take away,  
Though this world may be cruel, I know you weep alongside us  
Hold them in your love Lord and preserve them, grant them the peace which all soldiers seek,  
Let them rest, knowing they will never be forgotten  
Rest now in Christ dear friends.  
Lest we Forget.

## Loss

*Amelia Johnston*

---

Chilling  
Is the death count.  
Humbling  
Is the sacrifice.  
Crushing  
Is the loss.  
A war to end all wars,  
We told ourselves.  
This would be no more,  
We cried.  
They protected  
They defended  
They saved  
They died.  
They faced the dangers  
For a war they didn't start  
Buried by strangers  
But kept in our hearts.  
They completed the mission,  
In the end.  
The most crucial condition,  
Right?

## Unknown Grave

Chloe Chisholm

At Vimy's Crest, the sky stands wide  
A monument where the fallen reside  
Both the stone and the sorrow carved so deep,  
A memory we swear to keep

They climbed the ridge through the wire  
Through the chaos, through smoke and fire  
A nation's force, so fierce, so bright,  
Through the chill of April they rose to the fight

At Beaumont-Hamel's quiet land  
No bugle sounds marching band  
Yet, the echos still remain  
The lives of those we remember, who did not die in vain

The caribou stands, head held high  
Solemnly gazing against the sky  
Guarding the memories, speaking their names,  
Because as time may shift, their memories must always remain

Both places marked by sacrifice  
By shattered youth and heavy price  
Their lives entirely as valuable as mine or yours  
For I am just twenty-one and the unknown soldier, just twenty-two

For I am daughter as he was son  
And though the battle may be fought, it will never be done  
It is for this that Vimy's ridge and Beaumont-Hamel's plains  
Will always whisper of those who gave

## Forevermore

Pearce Newman

*Thirty memorable epitaphs from the Dieppe War Cemetery (as well as three other War Cemeteries) from the Second World War in France were collected by students and staff of the Mottershead Battlefield Tour, France and Belgium 2025. The epitaphs were then used to create a found poem, as seen below.*

*This poem is dedicated to the brave soldiers who lost their lives in the Second World War, and to the families who wrote their last goodbyes in the epitaphs inscribed on their tombstones.*

*A special thanks must be given to the Mottershead family for funding this moving, life changing trip.*

Love means  
sacrifice for what is right, fight  
the good fight.

Brother,  
Your country called.  
Brave heart, bode your last  
goodbye  
to home, mother,  
wife and daughter. Youth  
and strength departed  
Canada's shore  
to give your life  
to the fallacy:  
War ends war.

Brother,  
Together you pieced  
the mosaic of victory  
with truth  
duty  
valour.  
Freedom is  
a precious flower, watered  
by blood you shed.

Brother,  
Father,  
Husband,  
Son.  
You died to save mankind.  
We will remember you  
through death and life.  
Death cannot break  
the golden chains; our hearts  
linked, eternally  
to your grave

Brother,  
With a clear vision  
of what lay ahead  
you left  
for peace  
freedom  
Canada  
you did your best  
You gave your all.  
Now you rest  
with your comrades  
and God.

*(continues / suite)*

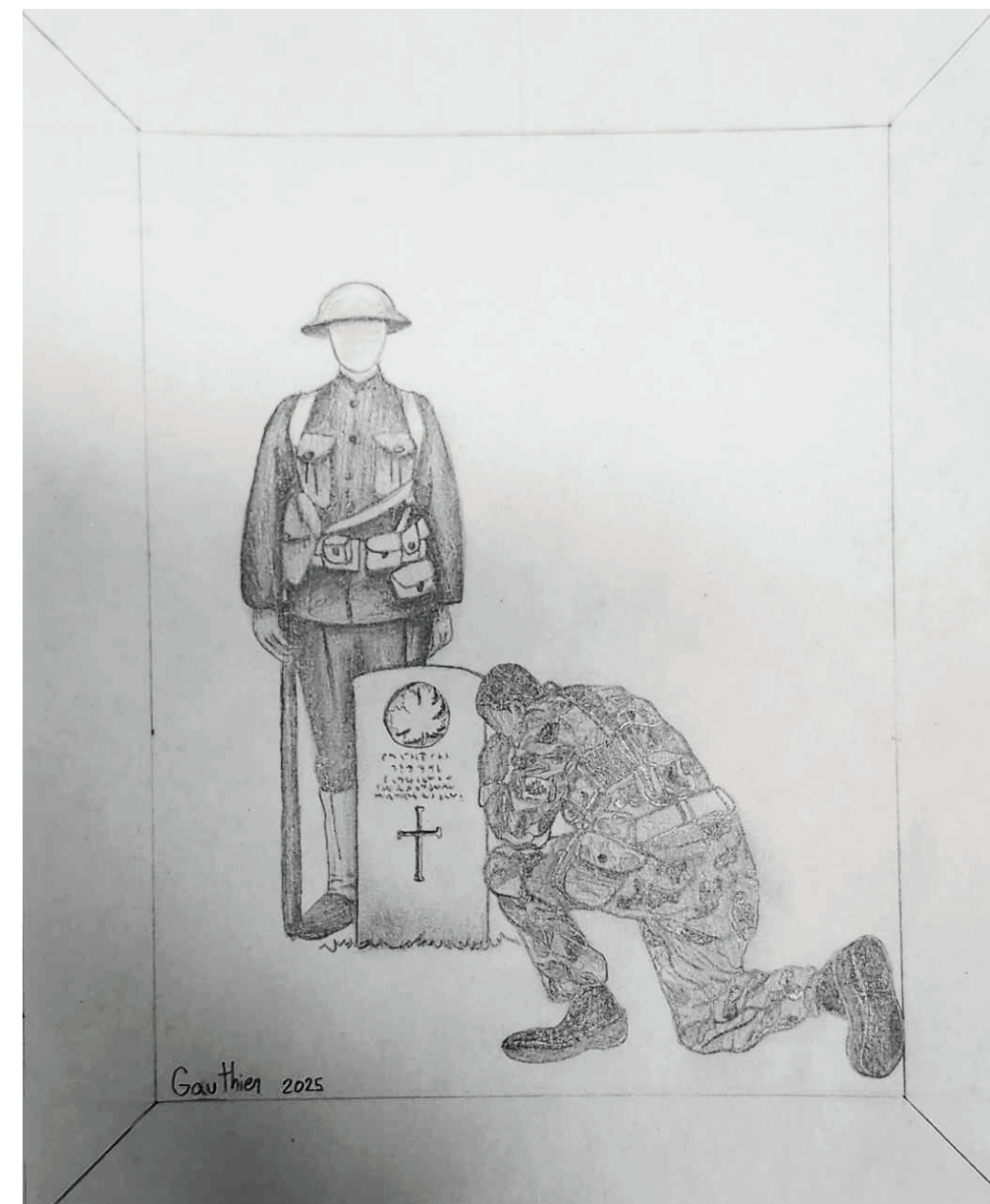
Brother,  
Deep in my heart, your soul  
is kept. Our angel  
we will not forget  
your sacrifice.  
We live because  
you gave up your life.

Brother,  
Your name will not fade, whither,  
nor decay. The sun will rise  
upon another shore

Brother,  
You  
and all your brothers  
(in arms)  
liveth  
forevermore

## Souvenir d'un soldat disparu

*Sarah Gauthier*

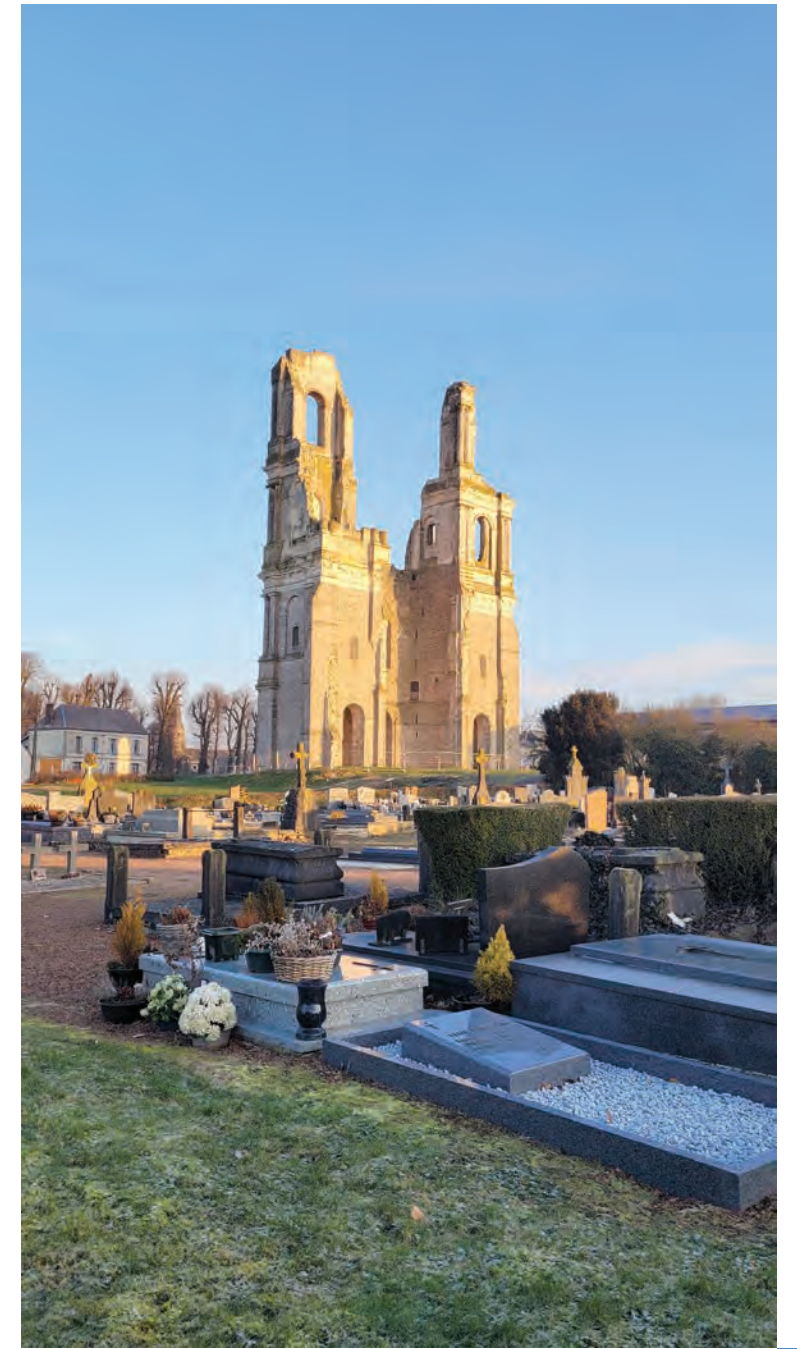


**Pictures taken by / Photographies prises par**  
*Kaitlyn Rainault*

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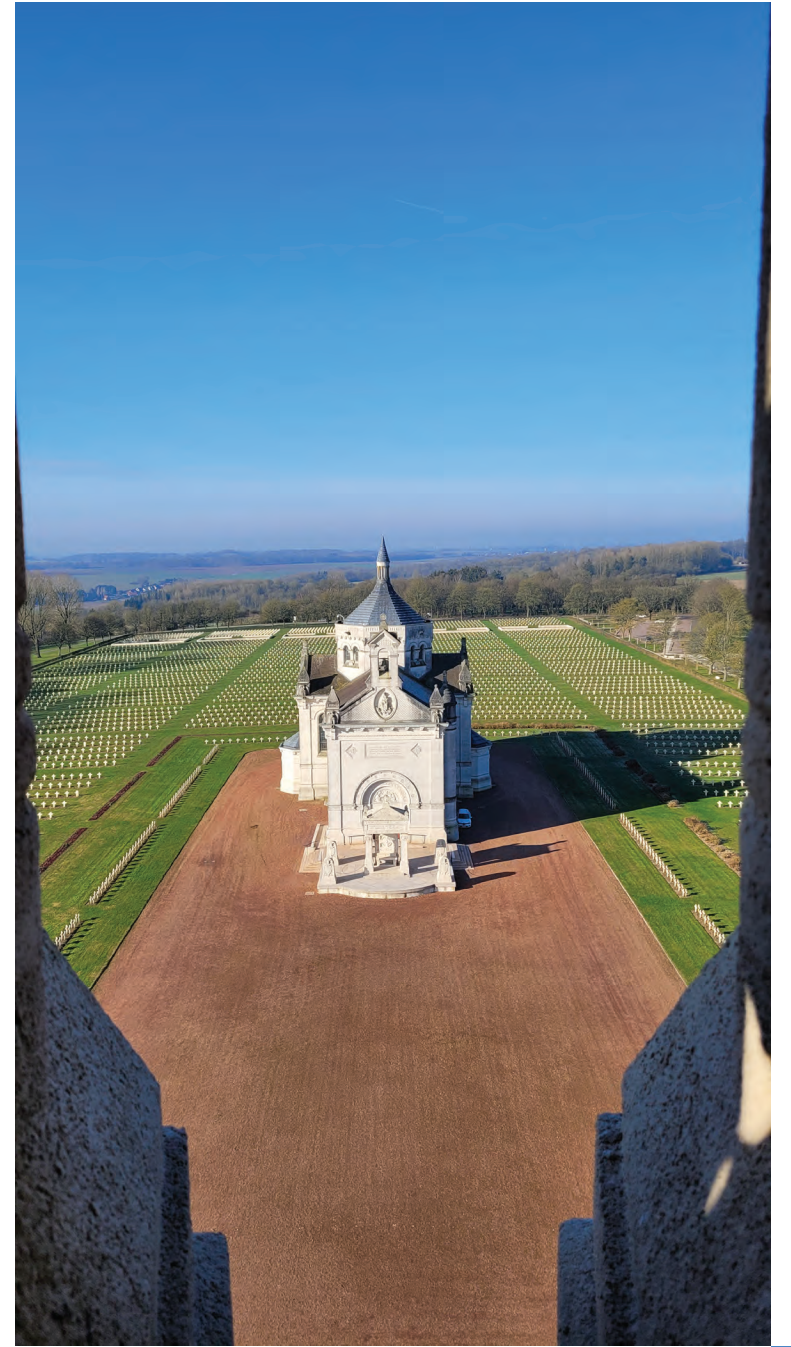
**Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial**  
**Le mémorial terre-neuvien à Beaumont-Hamel**



**Ruins of Mont-Saint-Eloi Abbey**  
**Ruines de l'Abbaye Mont-Saint-Éloi**



**Notre-Dame-de-Lorette National Necropolis**  
**Nécropole nationale de Notre-Dame-de-Lorette**



**Notre-Dame-de-Lorette National Necropolis**  
**Nécropole nationale de Notre-Dame-de-Lorette**



**Vimy Ridge Grange Subway tunnel**  
**Le souterrain Grange à la crête de Vimy**



**Preserved trenches at Vimy Ridge**  
**Système de tranchées préservées à la crête de Vimy**



**Canadian National Vimy Memorial**  
**Mémorial national du Canada à Vimy**



**Essex Farm Cemetery**  
**Cimetière de la ferme d'Essex**



**Saint-Julien Canadian Memorial**  
**“The Brooding Soldier”**  
**Mémorial canadien à Saint-Julien**



**Tyne Cot Cemetery**  
**Cimetière Tyne Cot**



**Dieppe Beach**  
**Plage de Dieppe**



**Signal Monument at Juno Beach**  
**Le monument Signal à Juno Beach**



**Monument for the Régiment de la Chaudière**  
**Stèle du Régiment de la Chaudière, Bernières-sur-mer**



**Picture taken at Juno Beach**  
**Photographie prise à la plage Juno Beach**



**Bény-sur-Mer Canadian War Cemetery**  
**Cimetière de guerre canadien de Bény-sur-Mer**



**MBFT France & Belgium 2025, picture taken near the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion Memorial in Varaville.**  
**VCBM France & Belgique 2025, photographie prise près de Varaville au Mémorial du 1<sup>er</sup> Bataillon canadien de parachutistes.**

A light green silhouette of the map of Italy is centered on a dark green background. The text 'VCBM Italie 2025' is positioned in the upper half of the map, and 'MBFT Italy 2025' is in the lower half.

VCBM Italie 2025

MBFT Italy 2025

## **Monter**

*Thomas Ladouceur*

---

Montez à bord, vous irez ouvrir un nouveau front.  
Engagés, effrayés, néanmoins déterminés à combattre.  
Les attentes seront hautes, tout autant que cette pression.  
Elle monte, tout comme vous, franchissant de nombreuses strates.

Il faudra escalader, et vous serez exténués.  
Vos jambes brûleront pendant que vous serez sous le feu ennemi.  
Lorsque viendra la nuit, vous ne voudrez pas de ce feu pour vous éclairer.  
Il vaut mieux ne pas voir ceux qui sont partis.

Les collines sembleront toujours plus nombreuses.  
Transporter ce poids sera votre épreuve douloureuse.  
Il faudra briser ces barrières qui barrent la route.  
Marchez, continuez de vous élever, avancez coûte que coûte.

Car en se donnant, en montant, la situation ira pour le mieux.  
Si l'on périt, nous irons tous en haut, rejoindre nos camarades aux cieux.

## **Fog**

*Alexander Lloyd*

---

It's quiet here.  
The kind of quiet you feel more than you hear.

The fog settles amidst the headstones,  
barely letting the sun through.  
Just enough light to read their names.

Most of them were my age.  
A few even younger.  
Same Army, same brotherhood.  
If we'd lived at the same time,  
we might have been friends.

It's strange.  
Surrounded by those who never made it home,  
and still feeling part of something bigger.  
Not exactly pride,  
but something clearer?

## **Auprès des oliviers**

*Simon Beaudry*

---

Je l'ai cueillie doucement...

Tirée franchement de sa branche,  
séparée de ses fruits voisins,  
je l'ai gardée au creux de ma main.

Me promenant dans ce champ d'âmes sacrifiées,  
je la laissais rouler entre mes doigts.

Et j'ai pensé.  
Et j'ai pleuré.  
Et j'ai marché.

Ne marcher dans aucune direction en particulier,  
me laissant guider par mon instinct et la brise.  
C'est comme s'ils m'accompagnaient —  
eux, ces gars de mon âge, de ma langue, de mon pays.  
Eux qui ont tout quitté, avec plus rien à perdre et tout à gagner,  
mais dont le temps s'est arrêté.

J'ai fini par la croquer.  
Elle goûtait l'amertume

## A Square in Ortona

*Zach Bowerman*

---

In the streets of Ortona, there lies a square,  
Named after some Canadians, who had fought there.  
It was Christmas time, although you would not know,  
The streets were riddled with rubble, left from the blows.  
In a farmhouse nearby, a boy waited,  
In fear for his family, isolated.  
His house was gone, turned to defence,  
His home was ruined, at what expense?  
His family was torn, divided by a line,  
A line that would connect his life with mine.  
The Seaforths and the Eds, they charged the town!  
Wearing their helmets and bearing a crown,  
A connection to home, so far away.  
From door to door, down the alleyways,  
The Canadians freed the town, but to what dismay,  
As they left many, many to stay.  
Some have died, although not in vain,  
As their story lives on, but not through sorrow or pain,  
They live on through the voice of a man who was saved.  
In the streets of Ortona, there lies a square,  
Where I met that young boy, near the Mer,  
And he told me his story, as I stared,  
Never have I been so proud to wear,  
A red maple leaf, so pure and fair.  
In the streets of Ortona, there lies a square,  
May we never forget what happened there.

## If I had been there

*Chloe Chisholm*

---

I walked where quiet heroes sleep,  
Their promises the earth still keeps.  
Names in stone, but hearts that once burned.  
For dreams and friends who'd not returned.  
Through Ortona's sunlit square,  
It felt unreal – the peace, the air.  
A town so warm, yet once in flame,  
Where youth and duty bore the same...  
I felt a pride I can't define,  
For those who marched a harsher line.  
But deep inside, a question stayed –  
Could I brave the way they made?  
They led not shouting, but with grace,  
Each choice etched softy on this place.  
No medals shone, no words were said,  
Just courage lived, while fear bled.  
Among their graves, so still, so young,  
I head the song they'd never sung.  
And in that silence, I could see,  
The cost of peace – it isn't free  
Now when I wear this uniform,  
I think of them through calm and storm.  
For courage isn't born, it's shared –  
By those who fought and those who cared.

## Les collines de la mémoire

Elly Abdo

---

Sous le ciel d'Italie, les collines se taisent,  
Le vent murmure encore des mots de malaise.  
Entre les oliviers, les croix blanches s'alignent,  
Et l'ombre du passé lentement se dessine.

Les campagnes dorées cachent des cicatrices,  
Là où jadis grondaient la guerre et ses supplices.  
La ligne gothique fendait la terre et l'âme,  
Et chaque tir brûlait le cœur d'une femme.

J'ai marché sur ces routes où d'autres ont souffert,  
Où l'écho des soldats plane dans l'air amer.  
Leur courage, silencieux, habite chaque pierre,  
Et fait trembler encore la poussière de guerre.

Dans chaque tombe, un nom, une histoire, un serment,  
Un souvenir d'honneur, un éclat de temps.  
L'Italie, si belle, porte dans ses vallées,  
Les pleurs du passé que le vent vient bercer.

Et moi, simple témoin d'un voyage d'école,  
J'ai senti dans ces lieux la mémoire qui frôle,  
Car comprendre la paix, c'est sentir la douleur,  
Des champs de bataille où battait encore le cœur.

## A Garden of Memories

Anonymous

---

*My reflection is a short poem based on an epitaph on the gravestone of 5960604, Private E. Johnson, of the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment. Johnson was 19 when he died on 8 December 1943, and his epitaph reads, "In a garden of memories, we meet everyday. Mum."*

*This epitaph was very heart-wrenching, and so I tried to create something that both honoured such a deeply moving epitaph, as well as honoured those who fought in Italy, and in the war as a whole.*

---

In a garden full of memories,  
One finds enclosed moments of serenity,  
Thoughts of friends and family,  
And those only seen rarely,  
Gold coloured lenses,  
Joyful to your senses,  
Forget not those who are forgotten,  
Those few who volunteered without caution,  
Those who stood up for you and me,  
Even without always knowing why,  
Some still close to us physically,  
Others solely seen through memory,  
They are frozen in their youth,  
As we remember them for all of eternity.

## The D-Day Doers

Gina Ge

---

They called them the D-Day Dodgers,  
Mocking them with ease,  
As if they'd been dealt a gentler hand,  
And fought near softer seas.  
But through the olive-shaded hills,  
Through storm and sun, through endless night,  
They faced the guns, they faced their fates,  
Their spirit never ceased the fight.  
They dodged no challenge, shirked no call,  
They bore the bitter toll,  
The pain, the loss, the suffering,  
They gave their all, even their souls.  
They fought a foreign fight,  
Fell on distant soil,  
Their youth burnt out in the fields,  
Their courage never failed their toil.  
It's said you die once when you're gone,  
But die again when you are forgotten,  
When the earth reclaims its own,  
Bones broken, corpse rotten.  
But for the D-Day Doers,  
Even memory's flame won't die,  
For those who gave their tomorrow for our today,  
Their names we keep held high.

## Ortona

Thomas Ladouceur

---

Je suis dans les ruines, bien loin de mon pays, loin de ma ville.  
Je ne sais pas si je reverrai Montréal un jour.  
Ce qu'il y a de l'autre côté de la porte pourrait mettre fin à mon parcours.  
Avance, une cour de faite, avance, une maison de faite, avance, une rue de faite.  
Dans les fenêtres et sur les toits, la mort me guette.  
Chaque étage conquis me rapproche un peu plus de la fin.

Noël arrive dans une neige qui tombe aussi fort que les pierres des bâtiments.  
Détruite, l'église ne fera pas sonner ses cloches  
Un réveillon au son des fusils et des grenades dans nos poches.  
Le froid de l'hiver dure plus longtemps quand les hommes s'entretuent.

Je dois continuer, effectuer la mission.  
L'issue est trop incertaine, maudit que c'est long.  
Que ce soit la victoire ou la défaite, je marche déjà sur le tapis rouge

## The D-Day Dodgers

*Nathan Hamilton*

---

They didn't land in Normandy,  
They trudged over hills, not sand.  
The papers spoke of victories in France,  
But they bled in a different land.

Over Coriano's rubble,  
Or Ortona's shattered streets,  
They fought through heat and cold,  
While the world wrote of other feats.

They were called the "dodgers" jokingly,  
Yet bore the cost unsaid  
Brothers fallen, names unspoken,  
Between olive groves and hillsides.

From the Rapido to the Melfa banks,  
Each crossing paid in red,  
These heroes sacrificed their youth,  
While many lay cold and dead.

Though the world may overlook,  
Their valour echoes still,  
In our thoughts they are remembered here,  
By those who have walked these hills.

And their names, though quietly told,  
Live on in our hearts, both brave and bold.  
The fallen who on hillsides lie,  
Beneath the Italian sky.

## Les croix

*Thomas Ladouceur*

---

Ces hommes avaient-ils tous la foi ?  
Toutes ces croix, par milliers,  
Taillées dans la pierre, faites de morceaux de bois.  
Combien de familles sont venues pour pleurer ?  
Un symbole d'espérance pour signifier qu'elles croient.  
L'acharnement au combat, le sacrifice, se résume à cette croix.

Les tombes s'alignent dans le silence.  
Les familles, les proches, ne se remettront jamais de leur absence.  
Le douloureux souvenir reste présent.  
La guerre, dans sa nature même, est profondément horrible.

Un si jeune âge pour tomber, ça dépasse l'entendement,  
Lorsque, la veille de la bataille, ils n'avaient que 20 ans.  
Maintenant, ils se reposent, gisent sur les terres libérées.  
Les oiseaux leur chantent un doux refrain, perchés sur les oliviers.

## Jeunes hommes courageux

*Aurélie Thibault*

Jeunes hommes courageux  
Forts, fiers, munis d'armes à feu  
Pour toujours, nous serons reconnaissants  
De leur puissant esprit de combattant

Provenant de partout  
Ces soldats un peu casse-cous  
Prêts à n'importe quoi pour assurer  
Un futur doux, paisible et protégé

Jour et nuit  
Le combat perdure à l'infini  
Ils sont tannés, blessés et fatigués  
Mais leur motivation, jamais brisée

Une fierté canadienne, ils le sont  
Leurs multiples exploits, nous reconnaissons  
Chaque année, le port du coquelicot  
Le silence, pour un minuto

Jeunes ils étaient  
Au moment de leur décès  
18, 19, 20 ans  
Trop tôt pour glisser vers le néant

À tout jamais dans notre cœur  
Nous porterons les noms de ces vainqueurs  
Jeunes hommes courageux  
Nous nous souviendrons d'eux.

## Gun Crew

*Alexander Lloyd*

Three headstones in a row,  
four names carved.  
Same date, same gun.  
One strike, and that was the end.

They rest side by side,  
their remains too mingled to part.  
Different faiths, different lives,  
bound by the same duty.

A star, a cross,  
and a maple leaf above them all.  
They fought together, died together, and lie together still.



## Dear Soldier

Jayden Lobo

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*This post tour reflection comes in the form of a letter to a deceased soldier. This soldier is around my age, about 20, just a normal man, deployed to Italy, and was killed in action. The inspiration for this letter came from the epitaphs on tombstones throughout the cemeteries in Italy. The ones that resonated most with me were the ones that described the pain the families felt, seeing their son or brother perish, which struck me particularly hard. They put into context the lives these soldiers left behind, the magnitude of their sacrifice, and their personal humility. The men who gave their lives are much greater than I am, so I wanted to dedicate this letter to them.*

---

Dear Soldier,  
If you could read this, I hope you would.  
I wanted to express my gratitude, so here it is:

The Italian campaign.  
Mountainous, tiring, wet, cold, and underappreciated.  
I get uncomfortable when my room gets too chilly, while you had to endure freezing cold river crossings under gunfire.

You left your life behind.  
A young man, just like me.  
Although a man, you may have sometimes still felt like a boy at heart.  
You probably enjoyed playing football and liked hanging out with your friends, spending time on weekends with your family, with hopes for after the world settles down, to have a long fruitful life.

You heard the call,  
and instead of choosing your own comfort and safety,  
you joined the fight.  
Your parents and siblings did not want to see you go,  
especially your sisters.  
You left everything behind,  
no guarantee of ever getting back to football, friends, school, church, or anything else.

When orders were given,  
You went out there with your brothers,  
Not leaving one behind.  
You were given a mission,  
And committed your life to achieving it

You brought the fight to the enemy.  
Bullets whizzing by, explosions, body hurting, ears ringing.  
You fought through pain,  
mental and physical,  
displayed the greatest love a man can demonstrate,  
to lay down his life for others.  
You breathed your last,  
and all was over.

It pains me to think you could not experience a full life,  
and enjoy the pursuit of a further vocation.  
Your parents saw you come into this world,  
and your family saw you leave it,  
although they remained.  
Your friends back home did not see you on the football field again.

I can only thank you so much for what you have done.  
It is because of you that I enjoy the freedom I have today.  
I can only aspire to be as great as you.  
Your model gives me a reason to work hard every day,  
to make the most of the blessings I have,  
to serve others with humility,  
to live a life of fortitude.

I will do my best to make sure your memory lives on.

With gratitude,  
Jayden Lobo

**Pictures taken by / Photographies prises par**  
*Lorie Ladouceur*

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**Monte Cassino Polish War Cemetery and the Abbey of Monte Cassino**  
**Cimetière militaire polonais et l'Abbaye de Monte Cassino**



**Abbey of Monte Cassino**  
**Abbaye de Monte Cassino**



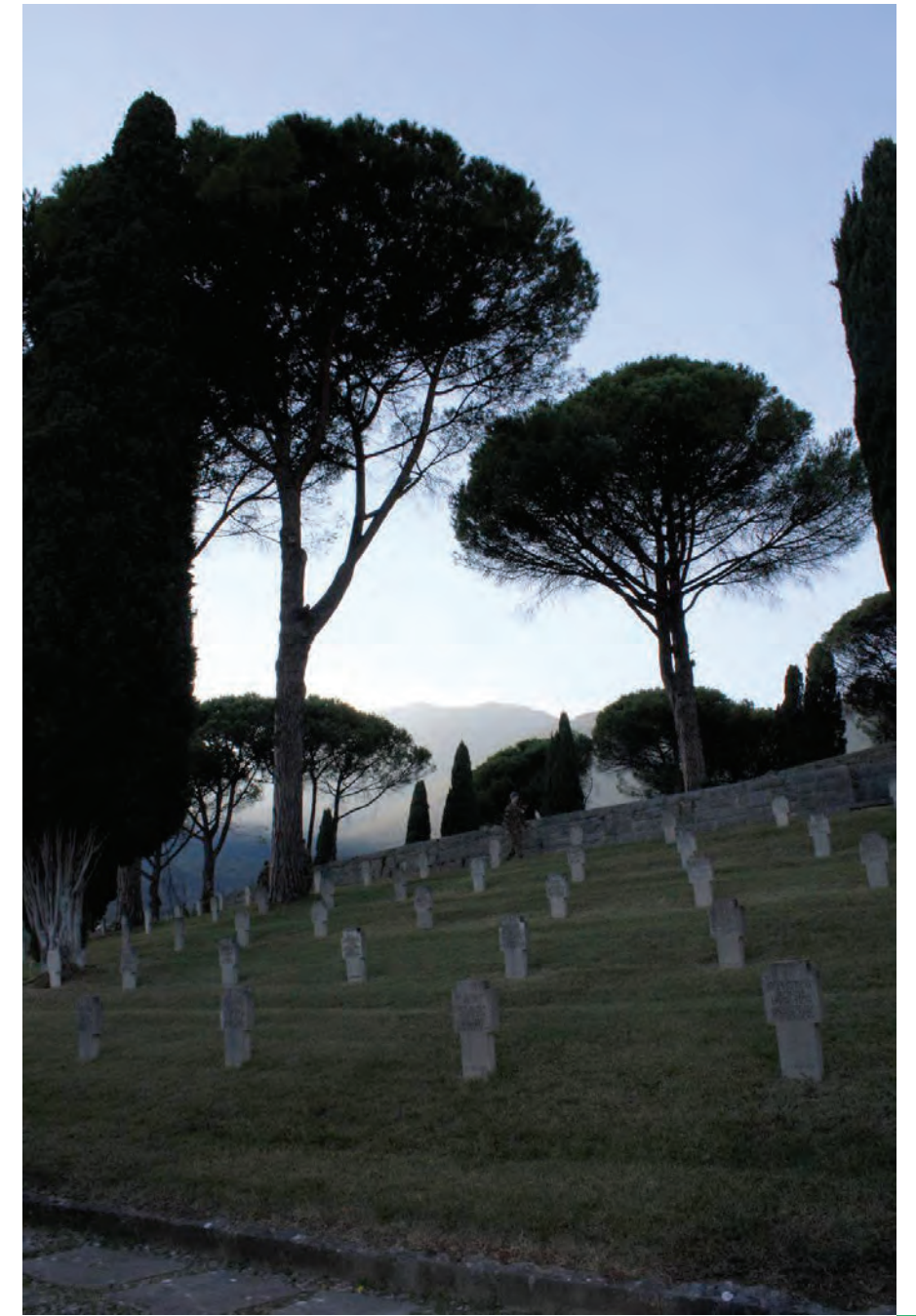
**Cassino War Cemetery**  
**Cimetière de guerre de Cassino**



**Cassino War Cemetery**  
**Cimetière de guerre de Cassino**



**Sangro River War Cemetery**  
Cimetière de guerre  
du fleuve Sangro



**German War Cemetery of Cassino**  
Le cimetière militaire  
allemand de Cassino



**Malatesta Castle of Coriano**  
**Château Malatesta de Coriano**



**Corso Vittorio Emanuele**  
**street in Ortona**  
**Rue Corso Vittorio**  
**Emanuele à Ortona**



**Coriano Ridge War Cemetery**  
**Cimetière de guerre de**  
**la crête de Coriano**



**Coriano Ridge War Cemetery**  
**Cimetière de guerre de la crête de Coriano**



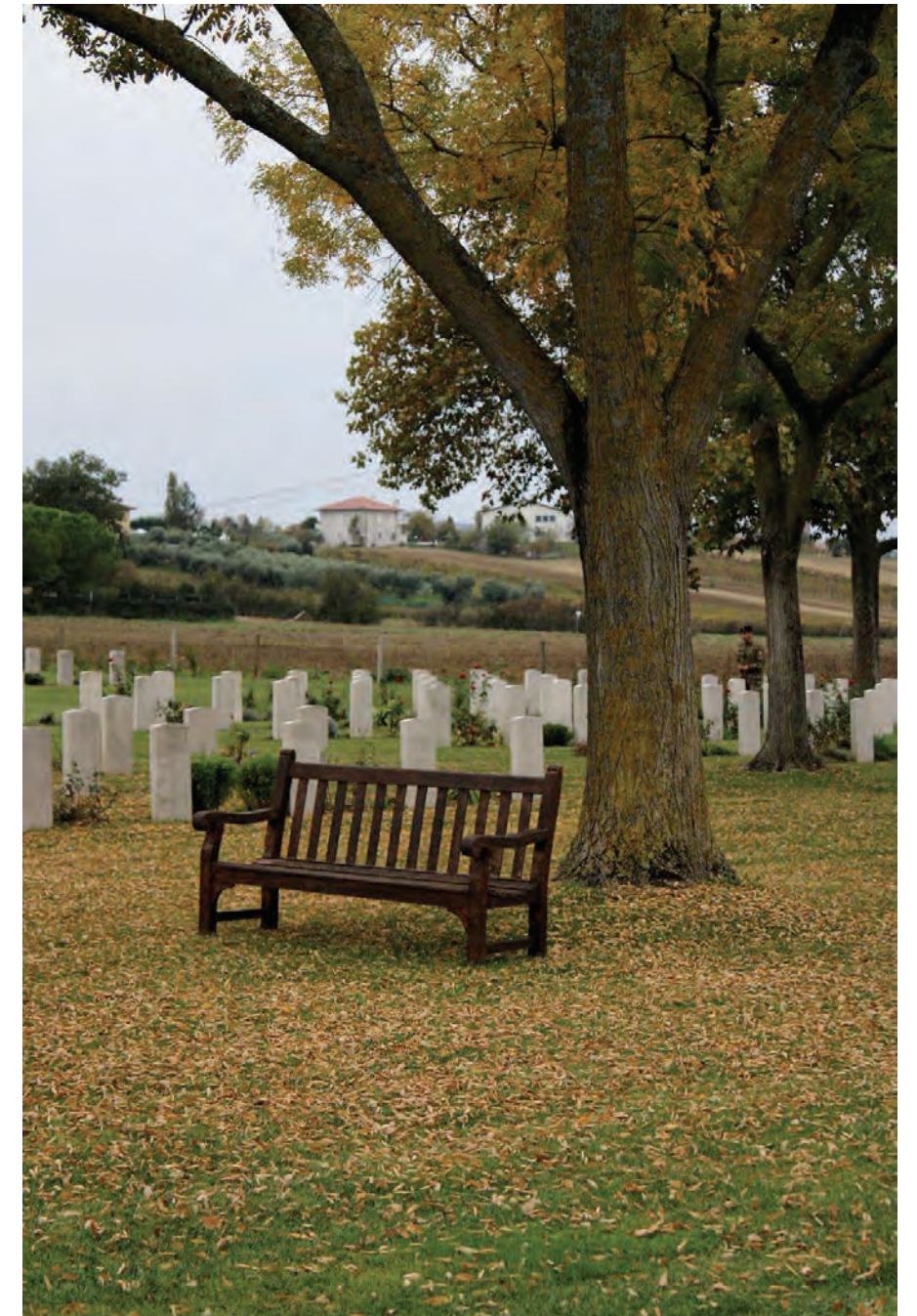
**Coriano Ridge War Cemetery**  
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**Cimetière de guerre de la crête de Coriano**



**Coriano Ridge War Cemetery**  
**Cimetière de guerre de**  
**la crête de Coriano**



**The Kingsmill Brigde Monument**  
**Le monument commémoratif Kingsmill Brigde**

## Acknowledgements

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I would like to thank everyone who helped me bring this book to life, especially to Dr. Kathyne Fontaine, Steve Lukits, Howard Coombs and Caroline D'Amours. I could not have possibly made it without your help and trust.

To Christopher Boucher, the graphic designer of Royal Military College of Canada, thank you for the remarkable work that made this project a reality.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the students who very generously granted me permission to reproduce their work in this collection.

Truth, Duty, Valour.

## Remerciements

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J'aimerais sincèrement remercier tous ceux qui m'ont aidée, de près comme de loin, dans la réalisation de ce projet. Un remerciement tout particulier aux Drs Kathyne Fontaine, Steve Lukits, Howard Coombs et Caroline D'Amours. Je n'aurais pas pu y arriver sans votre aide et votre confiance.

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Je tiens également à exprimer ma reconnaissance aux étudiants qui ont généreusement accepté que leurs travaux soient reproduits dans ce recueil.

Vérité, Devoir, Vaillance.

## Thank you

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We would like to express our gratitude for the generous funding from 5586 Ian and Rosemary Mottershead, as well as the Royal Military Colleges of Canada Alumni Association, whose support brought this creative endeavour to life.

## Merci

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Nous tenons à exprimer notre gratitude à 5586 Ian et Rosemary Mottershead ainsi qu'à l'Association des ancien(ne)s des CMR du Canada, ce qui a permis de donner vie à ce projet.

**Back Cover**

**Couverture arrière**

Word cloud visualization of the corpus from John W. Garvin's anthology, *Canadian Poems of the Great War* (1918). The graphic was generated using Python and its associated natural language processing libraries to analyze all 220 poems contributed by 73 poets. The size of each word is directly proportional to its frequency of occurrence within the text.

Visualisation sous forme de nuage de mots du corpus de l'anthologie de John W. Garvin, *Canadian Poems of the Great War* (1918). Ce graphique a été généré avec Python et ses bibliothèques de traitement du langage naturel afin d'analyser l'intégralité des 220 poèmes écrits par 73 poètes. La taille de chaque mot est directement proportionnelle à sa fréquence d'apparition dans le texte.

*Peter Choi*

