



Support a Jimmy

C&E Community Returns to Vimy Ridge 1-9 April 2017



As part of the national celebration Canada 150 in 2017, the Communications and Electronics Branch will celebrate the role that our Branch and its predecessors played in the building of our nation. One of our major activities, organized by our Heritage Committee and C&E Museum, includes taking our soldiers on a commemorative WWI /WWII Study Tour in April 2017. We are well advanced in planning and made bookings to bring 100 members of our C&E community to the Canadian battlefields of France and Belgium in April 2017 (Passchendaele, Menin Gate, Ypres, Hill 70, Verrières Ridge, Beaumont-Hamel, Arras, St. Julien, Courcellette, Dieppe, , Normandy, Juno Beach, Caen, and others). The highlight of this educational program will be joining the national commemoration on 9 April 2017 at Vimy Ridge on the 100th Anniversary of this battle that gave “birth to our nation”.

Our major goal with this program is to include 50 deserving junior soldiers (regular and reserve) in this Study Tour and have them joined by 50 more seasoned veterans. Note that many of the junior soldiers are already veterans; having deployed on operations in Afghanistan, Ukraine, Kuwait, Iraq, the Middle East and on Maritime patrols, just in the past few years. This program will educate the junior Branch members on the legacy for which they are picking up the torch. The tour will include a review of the operational and communications plan at each location as well as laying of a wreath on behalf of the Branch and units at commemorative ceremonies to honour fallen members of the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals and RCAF Signals and Radar Branch. The tour will include visits to memorials and war graves of Canadians and Signallers such as Charles Forrest Patterson.

When the war started, Charles Patterson was a student at University of Toronto. In December 1915 Charles Forrest Patterson, from St Catherine's, Ontario enlisted in the 4th Division Signal Company. He was promoted early to Corporal, but reverted in rank to Private serving as a Lineman after he arrived at the frontline in France 10 April 1917, the day after the attack on Vimy Ridge. He was at the battles of Lens and Hill 70 near Vimy. He died at Passchendaele at age 21, 100 years ago next year, 13 Nov 1917. The day that he was killed he was laying line between a Battalion and Brigade Headquarters, a distance of 500 yards in open countryside. He was with other linemen working under a heavy Artillery barrage that was part of a German counter-attack. Even as the Artillery fire intensified, he insisted on finishing the line task, almost reaching the unit dugout connection point when he was instantly killed. Of the 13 Signallers operating on the communications task, 12 were killed or seriously injured.

As there are no public funds available for this Study Tour, the Museum Foundation has initiated fundraising to subsidize the \$5000 individual cost for the junior soldiers to participate while the ‘senior’ group will pay their own way. The Colonel Commandant, BGen (ret) Bill Richard has already been successful with national fundraising identifying sponsors to provide a contribution of \$1500 per soldier, each of whom will personally contribute \$500. Each of our major units (regular and reserve) has been provided an opportunity to nominate for this Study Tour at least one deserving junior member, including members from each trade; however the unit must fund raise \$3000 for each of the soldiers who participate in this unique opportunity of a century. The units have several unit projects and local sponsors to assist them.

Serving and former members of our Branch, RCAF and RC Signals and our civilian associates may wish to help support the costs of the Battlefield Tour for deserving junior members of your unit or your trade. Donations can be made C&E Commemorative Battlefield Study Tour through the C&E Museum Foundation, Box 17000, Station Forces Kingston ON, K7K 7B4, tel **613-541-4675**. Donations can

be tagged to support the members from a specific unit or trade. You can also donate online at <https://www.canadahelps.org/dn/14172> . In the menu on the website select support for C&E Commemorative Battlefield Study Tour 2017 and insert in text box..... *support for (list trade or unit)*.

For those who may wish to join the Battlefield Study Tour and pay their own way, you can register as per the instructions at <http://cmcen.ca/2015/11/02/jimmy-is-going-to-vimy-ridge-april-2017-join-your-ce-colleagues/> (2 November 2015). Questions can be directed to the Branch Adjutant at **613-541-5010 ext 8371**.