Our university was founded as a living memorial to those who fought and died in the First World War. To mark the centenary, we honour their sacrifice, and remember those who were lost and those who returned.
To commemorate the centenary of the First World War, Luminus presents Acts of Remembrance, a series of reflections from alumni and friends.

Some of our contributors are direct descendants of those who served with the Newfoundland contingent. Others are simply motivated by our shared responsibility to commemorate. They all mark the centenary in creative and thoughtful ways, through art, music, genealogy, study, pilgrimage, and observances of all kinds.

Memorial University was founded in the name of those who fought and died. Together, we remember those who were lost and those who returned. We all honour their sacrifice through the living memorial that is our university.

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German barbed wire entanglements, known as 'knife rests', photographed in the Beaumont-Hamel area, 1916.
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PHOTO: © Imperial War Museums © IWM
My first day on the job as Memorial’s president and vice-chancellor was July 1, 2010. On that same day, my first official act was to lay a wreath on behalf of our university at the National War Memorial in downtown St. John’s.

Today, as then, I am humbled by our history. In the dark days following the devastation of the First World War there was resilience, strength and determination, and there was a desire to look forward and build a better future. The founders of our university reached across denominational lines to raise an institution of higher learning, one to honour the sacrifice of those who were lost and those who returned. The university would be a living memorial, one that would have a special responsibility to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The centenary of the First World War is an occasion of great significance for this province. At Memorial we remember in many ways, but particularly through our WW100 Commemoration Program, an initiative that began in 2014 and will continue to support a range of commemorative activities through 2019 (p. 8).

In the pages that follow, our alumni tell the stories of their own acts of remembrance, each one a personal reflection on their relationship to our shared history. That expression takes many creative forms … in words, art, music, scholarship and more. In the Last Word, author and alumnus Dr. Kevin Major eloquently provides his thoughts on the faces of The Great War. These are indeed some of the very personal ties that bind us to people and place.

Clearly these tributes are offered with great pride by each of our contributors. Pride is also what we should all share in the collective demonstration of our province’s growth and progress. Since our humble beginnings in 1925, Memorial University alumni have played a pivotal role in building Newfoundland and Labrador, first as teachers educating young people in towns and outports, and later as engineers, medical professionals, business leaders and artists — just to name a few professions. Our reach and influence has grown exponentially, now with national and international impact that resonates more loudly every day. That work is actively pursued by each one of you, as well as by the remarkable contributors to this issue of Luminus.

Together we are realizing the vision of Memorial University through the greatest act of remembrance, the advancement of our society through education, so that — to use the words taken from our memorial wall, “… in freedom of learning their cause and sacrifice might not be forgotten.”

Gary Kachanoski
President and Vice-Chancellor
We will never forget your sacrifice.
Frank Gogos is the chair of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment Museum, and public relations officer for the N.L. Command, Royal Canadian Legion.
he Royal Newfoundland Regiment has a storied past, but of all the stories, none are as captivating, or tragic, as the first day of the Battle of the Somme. As the centennial year of the Regiment’s tragic advance near Beaumont-Hamel is here, Newfoundland and Labrador’s attention is on the First World War. We are at the apex of remembrance, largely focusing on the tragedy of Beaumont-Hamel, yet seemingly unaware of the anniversaries that follow.

The number of commemorative events that occurred around this past July 1 in the province is simply staggering. However, the number of events after July 1 is notable mainly for the lack of them. After 100 years, our memory seems to have narrowed. For many, this province’s narrative in the First World War started with the Blue Puttees and stopped on July 1, 1916, at Beaumont-Hamel, with the exception of course, of Tommy Ricketts.

Why is this so?

It mainly has to do with how we perceive the events of July 1, 1916, which was largely the result of governments wanting to spin victory from a devastating loss. As a result, our collective conscience views Beaumont-Hamel as the end of the war for Newfoundland. Perhaps rightly so. The losses were so staggering that with the centennial upon us, the sting is almost as severe now as it was then.

But the Regiment’s story does not end there, and in some regards, it is where it actually began. In fact, the advance on Beaumont-Hamel is also significant in that it was the one time for the entire war that the Regiment was assigned an objective and failed to reach it. The Newfoundland Regiment fought steadfastly and were unfaltering in the face of the enemy in Gueudecourt, Monchy-le-Preux, Langemarck, and Poelcapelle, sometimes not only taking their objective, but that of the neighbouring battalions as well.

During the Battle of Cambrai in 1917, the Regiment fought with such valour that their actions were attributed by Field Marshal Douglas Haig and King George V as being the crowning achievement of the Newfoundland Regiment. In December 1917, the prefix “Royal” was granted for use by the King to the Newfoundland Regiment as a tribute to their gallant and stalwart bravery and sacrifice on the field of battle. It was the only time during the war that the prefix was granted to any regiment in the British Empire, and the third and last time it was bestowed during any war in British history. No higher tribute could be granted to a body of men for their service to the British Empire.

The Royal Newfoundland Regiment continued to fight, gaining accolades during the German spring offensive in 1918. That fall, as the closing stages of the war were already set in motion, they joined the march to Germany, fighting their way through Belgium’s countryside.

It was near the small Belgian village of Drie Masten that a young soldier from a tiny isolated outpost made a heroic dash for ammunition. Turning his Lewis machine gun towards a German strong point that was firing on the advancing Regiment, he put five field guns and four machine guns out of commission. For this exceptional act of bravery, Pte. Thomas Ricketts became the only recipient of the Victoria Cross awarded to a soldier of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment (see cover). He was, and still is, the youngest army combatant in the British Empire to receive such an honour.

The Victoria Cross was not Thomas’ only legacy. Growing up in a small rural community, he had no education. His rise to popular hero gave him the opportunity to go to school, for which he took full advantage. When he stepped off the S.S. Corsican in St. John’s harbour in 1919, he could barely sign his name. He stayed in St. John’s and attended Bishop Feild College before moving on to the first class of Memorial University College in 1925. A year later, he would become a pharmacist’s apprentice before striking out on his own practice a few years later.

Thomas’ strong desire to change his life through education is evident through his own actions, which he also instilled in his children. While the Victoria Cross is a proud achievement for a man who shunned the negative trappings of pride, there can be no greater legacy to leave behind than the gift of education.

While Newfoundland focused almost exclusively on the tragedy of Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, many more died in service to the Newfoundland contingent throughout the war. In total, for those who served in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve, the Newfoundland Mercantile Marine and the Newfoundland Forestry Corps, along with three nurses, the province’s combined losses were more than 1,600 men and women. These numbers do not include those who died while serving in the forces of other countries such as Canada, the United States, Great Britain and Australia. It was for them that Memorial University College was raised in memory, for the benefit of their families, and those of the returning servicemen and women.

Frank Gogos, BA’94

Frank Gogos is an author and historian. He is the chair of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment Museum, public relations officer for the N.L. Command, Royal Canadian Legion, and manager with the Newfoundland Bronze Foundry.
My act of remembrance started with a needle and thread.

In 2015 I learned that the Cabot Quilters’ Guild were seeking submissions of quilt blocks, the idea being a project to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Beaumont-Hamel.

My dad and I decided to work on a quilt block together, and it was one of many used to create 17 beautiful quilts. Together they became part of Peace-by-Piece: Quilted Memories of Newfoundland in the Great War. Our quilt block is dedicated to my great-uncle, Pte. George A. Madore, who fought at Beaumont-Hamel and survived, despite taking a bullet to the thigh. Less than a year later, in April 1917, he died in battle at Monchy-le-Preux.

The quilt block we created includes a picture of George, a brief summary of his life, and a poem written by my dad, one that is based on stories relayed to him by his father and other family members.

This past June, we completed the journey of commemoration by travelling to Europe. My husband, my father and I visited London, Paris, Beaumont-Hamel and Monchy-le-Preux. In London, we went to Tower Hill Memorial where my great-uncle Walter Madore’s name is listed on a monument to those who served in the merchant marines. He was my dad’s namesake, and he died during the Second World War on board the SS Hartington.

Our trip to Beaumont-Hamel and Monchy-le-Preux was everything I thought it would be and so much more. Seeing where so many young men made the ultimate sacrifice was haunting, and the presence of their spirits was palpable as I reflected on what they endured on that same ground 100 years ago. We owe a debt of gratitude to those who defended their country, and to their families at home whose lives were changed forever.

During our visit we were treated with such wonderful hospitality when we identified ourselves as Canadians, but saying we were from Newfoundland and Labrador brought about a completely different level of respect. Our history remembered and recognized that way was quite impressive, and it made us proud.

This was a once-in-a-lifetime journey for us. I feel fortunate that my father, a veteran himself and in good health at the age of 73, could join us. I am grateful that I could share that time and experience with him.

Tracy Madore was born in Labrador City, but grew up in Corner Brook, N.L. She now lives in St. John’s with her husband Gerry Snow and works as a Senior Application Systems Analyst with Inmarsat.
WW100
COMMENORATION
PROGRAM

WW100
LIVING MEMORIAL
The establishment of Memorial University College as a living memorial to those Newfoundlanders who fought and died is a unique origin among universities in North America. It is an honour that carries a special responsibility.

To commemorate the centenary of the First World War, in 2014 the university created the WW100 Commemoration Program. It is designed to encourage and empower the entire university community to develop projects that are academic, commemorative, or contribute to library and archival resources. Seed funding for these projects is provided through the Living Memorial Commemoration Fund. As of fall 2016, more than 62 projects have been sponsored.

Over the past three years, we have commemorated in ways both big and small. For example, we have distributed commemorative collegiate scarves to new students, the Queen Elizabeth II library is digitizing key Newfoundland and Labrador newspapers during the war years, and the Faculty of Medicine held a symposium on Dr. Cluny Macpherson, Honorary D.Sci.’62, the Newfoundland medical doctor who invented the first gas mask. The faculty has also acquired an original First World War gas mask for permanent display at the medical school. At alumni events across Canada we have distributed thousands of forget-me-not lapel pins, a special symbol of remembrance that was adopted in Newfoundland after the First World War.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE

On the West Coast at Grenfell Campus, Dr. Maura Hanrahan, BA’84, received funding to study the Newfoundland Mi’kmaw participation in the First World War. Dr. Hanrahan’s initial research revealed that little was known about Newfoundland and Labrador Aboriginal soldiers in the First World War. To address this gap, Dr. Hanrahan and a student assistant conducted interviews, researched archives and visited cemeteries. As a result, she has compiled a data set on more than 140 Aboriginal soldiers which has added immeasurably to the collective knowledge of the First World War.

Among other research projects is Dr. Jim Connor’s interdisciplinary work through the Faculty of Medicine. Dr. Connor looks at the origins of plastic surgery in the First World War, with a focus on Pte. George Stone, a soldier who suffered severe facial injuries at Beaumont-Hamel and whose case was indicative of others during the period that advanced the evolution of plastic surgery. He also explores Pte. Stone’s post-war experience, one of lifelong struggle and perseverance that serves as a reminder to also commemorate those who returned.
Amanda Lindhout is a kidnap survivor, bestselling author and humanitarian. She delivered the keynote address at the multi-disciplinary conference on PTSD held at Memorial University from July 31-Aug. 2, 2016.

One of 20 paintings exclusively depicting the poppy included in an exhibit at the First Space Gallery in the QEII Library on Memorial’s St. John’s Campus. Titled, From Hostility to Friendship 1915-2015: Remembering the Fallen Soldiers in Gallipoli with Poppies, it featured the work of Turkish artist Hikmet Çetinkaya and ran from July 24-Sept. 15, 2016. The exhibit was made possible by the Turkish Embassy to Canada in Ottawa.

Research and symposia are building on our knowledge of the past, while also addressing challenges in the present.


Amanda Lindhout is a kidnap survivor, bestselling author and humanitarian. She delivered the keynote address at the multi-disciplinary conference on PTSD held at Memorial University from July 31-Aug. 2, 2016.

The WW100 Commemoration Program is empowering the entire university community to develop projects that are academic, commemorative or contribute to library and archival resources.
PILGRIMAGE, REMEMBRANCE AND REDEDICATION

A group of 24 Memorial students studying at Harlow Campus in the U.K. were able to visit the historic battlefield at Beaumont-Hamel, France in November 2014. During their Remembrance Day experience, made possible with support from the commemoration fund, they made a poignant video of each student reciting a portion of the John Oxenham poem, Tread Softly Here. Before the day ended, the students had uploaded the video to YouTube. It can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBw_LnDj0yg.

Of course, before Beaumont-Hamel there was Gallipoli, where the Newfoundland Regiment was first introduced to battle. In 2015, a number of activities were organized to recognize the centenary of the Regiment’s war time on the peninsula. These included an art exhibition of poppy paintings by Turkish artist Hikmet Çetinkaya, a free public symposium on the campaign and a Gallipoli-themed Ceremony of Remembrance. During the annual university ceremony, students from Newfoundland and Labrador and Turkey read letters written by soldiers from both sides at Gallipoli. This event was the highest kind of commemoration — one in which once-combatants peacefully remembered all of the fallen.

The rededication of Memorial’s original Parade Street campus also occurred in 2015, upon completion of construction at the site of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC) Headquarters at Fort Townshend in St. John’s. Renamed the Newfoundland Constabulary Memorial Campus, the building now bears a new memorial plaque that reflects its unique history. The WW100 program partnered with the Memorial on Parade Commemoration Committee, a group of volunteers led by committee chair Robert LeMessurier, BA’62, B.Ed.’63. The group initiated a fundraising effort for the plaque and worked with other volunteers from the former Fisheries College and the RNC. The committee is now working toward an initiative for the site that will reference its complete history and expand on the memorial.

LOOKING BACK AND THINKING FORWARD

In 2016 the WW100 program supported a day-long symposium that was presented in partnership with the Royal Newfoundland Regimental Advisory Council and the Newfoundland Historic Society and dedicated to the memory of local historian Dr. W. David Parsons. 1916: Beaumont-Hamel and Beyond, was held on June 18, and the program included an overview of the major conflicts of 1916 in order to place Beaumont-Hamel in perspective. Presentations allowed participants to follow the Newfoundland Regiment from Gallipoli to Beaumont-Hamel and a broad range of projects were featured. One example was an initiative led by David Mercer, B.Sc.’89, M.Sc.’96, geographic information system specialist with Memorial University Libraries. His work represents period-specific battlefield topography with computer-generated images, showing those landscapes from the perspective of the soldiers in the First World War. The symposium was launched the previous evening with a special screening of the new full-length documentary, Newfoundland at Armageddon, at Memorial’s Bruneau Centre for Research and Innovation. Sessions from the symposium can be viewed online at http://www.mun.ca/WW100/Symposium1916B.php.

A national multidisciplinary conference on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), organized by the SafetyNet Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, was also sponsored by the WW100 program and hosted on Memorial’s St. John’s campus from July 31-Aug. 2, 2016. One hundred years after the First World War, the complex challenges associated with PTSD are still being faced daily, not only by veterans who have experienced the trauma of military service, but also by a range of people in diverse occupational settings who are exposed to threats to their physical or emotional safety. This conference brought together researchers from a variety of universities and disciplines, a range of community partners, experts, stakeholders, and members of the public with expertise and interest in issues related to the complex realities of PTSD.

Many student-focused projects have also been supported. The Theatre, Film, and Society initiative, led by Dr. Jamie Skidmore of the Department of English and Dr. Andrea Proctor of the Department of Geography, is a joint program that was offered at Memorial’s Harlow Campus during the fall 2016 semester. It supported students’ travel to Beaumont-Hamel, Vimy Ridge and Berlin to create films and other visual media pieces commemorating the First and Second World Wars. Dr. Skidmore’s English 4401 course was also assisted through the WW100 program in the staging of Kevin Kerr’s award-winning play, Unity (1918).
A MONUMENT AND A LIVING LEGACY

This past year also saw the official dedication of the Danger Tree sculpture at Grenfell Campus (see p.8) by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, who is the Royal Newfoundland Regiment’s colonel-in-chief. Created by Corner Brook native Morgan MacDonald, BBA’04, the installation was the result of a tremendous fundraising effort by the Forget-Me-Not Committee under the leadership of its chair, Dave Higdon.

With three more years of the centenary period remaining, we will continue to see important outcomes of our investments in commemoration activities. Plans include ongoing work on an education initiative in Labrador with the Labrador Heritage Society; other class and student trips to Beaumont-Hamel and other battlefield sites in Europe; public lectures and symposia as well as the many ongoing academic initiatives that continue to advance relevant areas of study and research.

Clearly, Memorial University recognizes that it has a special responsibility as a living memorial. Through these and other WW100 program projects, the university aims to create tangible legacies of the First World War experience. However, Memorial University is more than a living memorial. We embody an aspiration of those who served — to build a better world. The struggles of our forbearers in the First World War, both in the war theatre and on the home front, are an inspiration for us all to strive for excellence and to give back to society. Memorial University is a living legacy that continues to support the development of our people and our province.

Bert Riggs, BA(Hons.)’77, B.Ed.’77, MA’12

Bert Riggs is the former head, Archives and Special Collections, QEII Library, Memorial University, and a member of the advisory and steering committees for the WW100 Commemoration Program.

For more information on Memorial’s WW100 program, please visit www.mun.ca/WW100.

(Editor’s note: Other initiatives referenced in this issue of Luminus have received varying levels of support through the Living Memorial Commemoration Fund. These include the Cabot Quilters’ Guild project, Peace-by-Piece: Quilted Memories of Newfoundland in the Great War (p.6); Remembering Calypso (p.24); and the Church Lads’ Brigade Tour of Honour (p.28).)
Through estate gifts it is possible to make a contribution that will benefit generations of future students. Legacy gifts nurture tomorrow’s leaders, creators, helpers, innovators and healers. It is a truly meaningful way to be remembered or honour a loved one.

PLANNED GIVING AT MEMORIAL
YOUR LEGACY, OUR FUTURE

To learn more about how to make a legacy gift to Memorial University, please contact: Catherine Barrett, Development Officer, Planned Giving, Alumni Affairs and Development at (709) 864-2157, toll free 1 (877) 700 4081 or legacy@mun.ca

mun.ca/alumni
pl. Thomas A. Pittman, a native of Little Bay East in Fortune Bay, N.L., enlisted in the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment on July 24, 1915. He was 26 years old.

It wasn’t long before Tom Pittman would find himself in the middle of heavy fighting on the Western Front. During the Battle of the Somme he sustained shrapnel wounds in the head and side and was awarded the Military Medal for bravery. During the Battle of Cambrai in November 1917 he suffered a bullet in the shoulder and received the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his heroics. He was widely known as a skillful handler of the portable Lewis machine gun.

While Tom was stationed in England, he posed for sculptor Basil Gotto. The result was the statue that now stands in Bowring Park. After the war, Tom resided in Mount Pearl, N.L. until he passed away in 1966.

One of our acts of remembrance in 2016 has been the creation of a new town sign. Today, you are welcomed to Little Bay East as the birthplace of Cpl. Thomas Pittman, The Fighting Newfoundlander.

Cora Scott and Clyde Scott, BA(Ed.)’69, BA’70

Cora and Clyde Scott are the mayor and deputy mayor, respectively, of Little Bay East, N.L.
Lance-Cpl. Japheth Hounsell, was my uncle, my mother’s much older brother. Their ancestral home in Pound Cove, Bonavista Bay, N.L., was where I spent every summer until I turned 14.

Japheth enlisted in the Newfoundland Regiment on Feb. 23, 1916, and joined his battalion in France on July 21, not long after the devastation at Beaumont-Hamel. His regiment was sent to Ypres, and on to the Somme. By April 1917, he was a signaller serving on the Western Front during the three-month-long Battle of Arras. There, at Monchy-le-Preux, he became one of the legendary Monchy Ten.

On April 14, 1917, an attack on the German line failed and the Germans counterattacked. Newfoundland and British losses were significant and it appeared hopeless, but in a last-ditch effort to save the day, the headquarters staff, including Japheth, were sent into action. There were 20 at the start, but only 10 survived the initial advance. These 10 men held off the enemy (who were in far greater numbers) for hours until relief came. Official records note that this small group of men, “represented all that stood between the Germans and Monchy, one of the most vital positions on the whole battlefield.” All 10 were honoured for their bravery.

Almost a year later, in 1918, Uncle Japheth was killed. The document from the British War Office that hung in the dining room said he died on April 13, buried by the enemy somewhere near Baillieu, east of Arras, France. I remember King George V, in a resplendent gold trimmed military uniform, glaring down from the wall in a black frame. Whenever I looked at it, I wondered what made my uncle decide to leave his home to go and fight so far away.

Sandra Eaton, BA’66

Sandra Eaton was born near Wesleyville, Bonavista Bay North. She taught communications at Georgian College in Orillia, Ont. for over 30 years, and is now happily retired in Orillia.
Morgan MacDonald is known for his bronze works and sculptural interpretations of Newfoundland and Labrador's history and culture.
Bronze endures for such a long period of time. I think for that reason, I seem to be drawn to things that are worthy of commemorating in very broad themes and are pertinent to public exhibition. What I find most inspirational are the personal and powerful stories that can be depicted and told.

Working on different war memorials in Newfoundland and Labrador during the last 10 years, and meeting so many people who have such strong connections to the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel and the First World War — that's really where I found the idea for 100 Portraits of the Great War.

For this project, 100 descendants of those who served with the Newfoundland contingent during the First World War will have their faces cast. Together, these 100 will form the final creation. A book and film documentary are also being produced to coincide with the piece.

The families who directly experienced and lived through the tragedy of Beaumont-Hamel, they are all but gone. But what is remarkable to me is that their descendants, through the generations since 1916, have continued to carry the weight of sorrow and pride that is associated with their loved one’s service.

After the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel, Newfoundland’s participation in the First World War continued and many more lives were lost. And for those that returned, they brought the physical and emotional burdens home with them and eventually to their families.

How profound is a tragedy that affects us 100 years later?

Morgan MacDonald, BBA’04

Morgan MacDonald is the founder of the Newfoundland Bronze Foundry. His work can be found across Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada and internationally. Notable among many iconic monuments are the Sealer’s Memorial in Elliston, N.L., “A Time” on George Street in St. John’s, N.L., and the recently installed Danger Tree sculpture in Corner Brook, N.L. He was introduced to the bronze foundry process as a student at Memorial’s Grenfell Campus and is originally from Corner Brook. In 2016 Mr. MacDonald was named the Alumni Horizon Award recipient for exceptional achievement by a Memorial graduate 35 years of age or younger.
When I was a teenager, my grandfather, Chesley Green, gave me an old black and white photo of himself in an army uniform. I remember it clearly because, to me, it was the only time he had ever openly acknowledged, “his war.” Despite my questions, it was a conversation he always avoided.

When I got older, after grandfather passed away, my dad and his brothers told me that Chesley had never talked about the war. As children, there are things they recall that provide insight into the lasting effects the war had. They remember playing with his military medals, items that have long since disappeared. And they remember Chesley would never go to sleep at night without his bedroom lights on.

Born in 1897 in Tilt Cove, N.L., Chesley experienced tragedy at an early age. When he was five years old, his father William was killed in a mining accident. The family would later move to Harry’s Harbour and it was from there Chesley travelled to St. John’s, as an underage teenager, in his first attempt to enlist. His mother chased him all the way there and pulled him back. However, she couldn’t keep him home forever and in February 1917, at the age of 20, he signed up to join the war effort.

After training in St. John’s and Southampton, England, Chesley joined the 1st Battalion of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment in February 1918 in the trenches at Passchendaele. One month later, he suffered multiple gunshot wounds to the arm and leg. He spent over a year recovering from his injuries in various hospitals in England, and was ultimately discharged and shipped back to St. John’s from Liverpool in May 1919.

The story of Chesley Green is a family affair, one that is near and dear to the hearts of me and my siblings. We are proud of our grandfather, and all those who served and sacrificed so much on the Trail of the Caribou.

Barbara Green-Noble

Barbara Green-Noble is originally from Baie Verte, N.L. and first attended Memorial in the 1970s. She became interested in her family tree as a teenager, and along with her siblings, Hope, Paul (B.Eng.’79, M.Eng.’84), David (B.Eng.’85), Gloria (BPE’85, B.Ed.’85), and Peter (Dip. of Tech.’92), proudly tell the story of their grandfather, Chesley Green. Barbara currently resides in Burlington, N.L.
It all started with a phone call from my dear friend and former schoolmate, Kellie Walsh.

Kellie is a highly respected musician who conducts several ensembles, including Lady Cove, an award-winning women’s choir based in St. John’s. 2016 marked 100 years since the fateful Battle of Beaumont-Hamel, and Lady Cove was planning a concert in remembrance of the soldiers who fought and lost their lives. It was to be a concert to entertain the troops — one they never received. Kellie asked me to be host and musical guest for the evening and I enthusiastically accepted.

Over the next two months I learned more about the wartime history of Newfoundland and Labrador than I had ever known. I read stories about the support the men had from their communities, letters from young soldiers to their families and memoirs of those who survived. On more than one occasion, my tears dropped on the notes I was making, as the emotional weight of the information was just too overwhelming. I felt a combination of tremendous pride and remarkable grief. In letter after letter and memoir after memoir, one element was particularly clear. While these boys may have been fighting for King and country (Britain), they were doing so representing one place and one place only: Newfoundland.

Once the music was chosen and the repertoire shared with me, my job was to weave things together, to connect the events of the time with the performance of First World War-era songs and classics from the turn of the century. The show was called *For The Boys*.

There is no way to convey the privilege I felt at being part of that concert. I loved talking about the period, connecting the popularity of female film stars to the drafting of so many men, discussing the emergence of Dixieland music, introducing and sometimes singing songs like: You Belong To Me, K-K-K-Katy and Lift Ev’ry Voice. It all happened in front of a room of more than 400 people who sat shoulder to shoulder, listening intently, at times singing along full-voice, and crying together in respectful nostalgia.

So, I was able to come home, to celebrate and relish in the fact that I could return home . . . and to pay homage to those who were never to come home again.

*Heather Bambrick, BA’93*

*Heather Bambrick is an award-winning jazz singer, voice actor, broadcaster and educator. She is based in Toronto, Ont.*
Greg O'Brien is the great-nephew of Pte. Peter J. Hudson.
This year, the IceCaps, the American Hockey League team based in St. John’s, created a Royal Newfoundland Regiment tribute jersey. I thought it was a pretty unique and thoughtful way to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme at Beaumont-Hamel.

This jersey is very special to me. It was a gift from my parents and it honours the memory of my great-uncle, Pte. Peter J. Hudson, a member of the Newfoundland Regiment. He was born and raised in St. John’s, on Mullock Street, just around the corner from the CLB Armoury on Harvey Road. That was the central recruitment station and regimental headquarters back then. In those early days, the neighbourhood must have been full of excitement with the sights and sounds of eager young men going off to fight, proud to represent Newfoundland. I’m sure Peter joined them in their optimism that they’d be home soon.

As we all know, the reality of war was laid bare at Beaumont-Hamel. It was there Peter was fatally wounded on July 1, 1916. He died three days later and was buried at Gezaincourt Cemetery, just south of Doullens, France. The 100th anniversary has motivated me to reflect on his life and to piece together this important part of our family history. I’m struck by how little information we have — a few stories passed down over the years and some official records in the provincial archives. Cameras were scarce in those days, and I suspect very few pictures of him ever existed. Our family has never been able to locate a photograph. You don’t think about how quickly history can become lost, and as the days and years go by, the telling of these stories becomes more and more difficult.

I do know that Peter lied about his age. His enlistment papers say 19, but in fact he was only 16 when he signed up. By today’s standards he was just a young kid. Though I’m sure his mom and dad must have thought the same thing back then. He celebrated his 17th birthday not long before he was killed. The number on my jersey marks his youth. It was a life barely started.

Greg O’Brien, B.Comm.(Co-op.)’11

Greg O’Brien is a financial advisor with Dunphy, Molloy and Associates Ltd. Originally from Calvert on the Southern Shore, he currently lives in St. John’s.

The St. John’s IceCaps Royal Newfoundland Regiment tribute jersey commemorates the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme at Beaumont-Hamel.
FRANCES 
CLUETT, 
VAD
to say that I’ve had an unconventional career path is an understatement. I worked for many years as a registered nurse in the United States, Canada and in London, England. I moved back to St. John’s in 1978 with the idea of upgrading my RN (registered nurse) to a bachelor of nursing degree at Memorial, deciding to begin my university career by taking some history courses to “get my feet wet” as a student. Those few courses turned into a bachelor of arts in history and then a master of arts, after which I got a job in the Archives and Special Collections section of the Queen Elizabeth II Library.

However, serendipity might have been at play in 1993, because one of the first projects I worked on was the Frances Cluett collection. It had just been donated to Memorial by Frances Cluett’s nephew, Rev. Vernon Cluett, an Anglican minister living in Halifax, N.S.

Frances was a teacher working in her hometown of Belleoram, N.L., a prosperous community on the west side of Fortune Bay, when she decided to join the war effort in October 1916. She signed on as a member of the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) and less than six months later would find herself working in a field hospital near the front lines.

Interacting with these items is an opportunity to see this moment in history through her eyes. The letters and drawings, the personal effects, they are the experience as she lived it. This collection is particularly important because the contributions of Frances Cluett and all the Newfoundland women who served as VADs are often overlooked. These women directly experienced the horrors of war, and in many cases put themselves in harm’s way. In Frances’s case, by May 1917, she was with the British Expeditionary Force and was stationed at the 10th General Hospital in Rouen, France. She stayed there until the end of the war, caring for countless wounded and dying soldiers.

Your Daughter Fanny: The War Letters of Frances Cluett, VAD was published by Flanker Press in 2006 and is an excellent resource for anyone who wants to learn more about her life and contributions during the First World War. She was also honoured by Memorial University in 2014 with the naming of Cluett Hall, one of the new student residence buildings on the St. John’s campus.

And of course, we encourage people to visit Archives and Special Collections on the third floor of the Queen Elizabeth II Library. The beauty of primary documents and artifacts like these is that they come with no interpretation. It’s our job to simply preserve the history. When you view it, your experience is your own.

Linda White is an archivist with Archives and Special Collections, QEII Library, Memorial University.

A medal given to Frances by a German soldier who was under her care.

Left: items from the Frances Cluett collection, including photos, personal sketches, passport, and VAD armband.

Linda White holds a sketch drawn by Frances Cluett that depicts the field hospital where she served as a VAD.
Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have a strong connection to the sea, so it was no coincidence that hundreds came forward to serve in the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve during the First World War. Many were fishermen — no strangers to hard work or harsh conditions.

To ensure the men were equipped with the necessary skills to survive at sea during wartime, specialized training was required. They received this training aboard a dedicated vessel docked in St. John’s, the HMS Calypso.

The story of the HMS Calypso and those who trained on board the vessel has been brought to life, thanks to a new interactive website designed by a cross-campus team at the Fisheries and Marine Institute (MI) of Memorial University. Featuring the original ship’s drawings and dozens of photos, the site serves as a modern, virtual memorial to the young men who bravely stepped forward to serve in the Royal Navy.

The HMS Calypso was originally built to defend. Armed with four mounted six-inch breech-loaders and 12 five-inch breech loaders, the vessel also featured six machine guns on the upper deck and two 14-inch torpedo tubes on the main deck. However, upon her arrival in St. John’s, the Calypso was transformed to make way for the nearly 1,300 reservists who would receive wartime training aboard the vessel between 1902 and the start of the First World War on July 28, 1914.

The Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve was formed in 1900 as a trial. Initially, the men agreed to a five-year term upon enrolment, service that included training and time at sea. When war broke out, about 500 men were enrolled in the Royal Naval Reserve and they all immediately responded to the call for active service. After training on board the Calypso, the reservists from Newfoundland would be dispersed throughout the British Royal Navy, serving on different vessels around the globe.

The HMS Calypso was renamed HMS Briton in 1916 and several years later she was sold to a local merchant for storage. Today, what remains of the vessel lies in a small cove off the town of Embree, just north of Lewisporte, N.L.

The Marine Institute team is proud to commemorate the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve and the HMS Calypso with this new website, a tribute that captures the many faces of the young men who served and the vessel that provided the backdrop for their important training. You can visit the website at http://ww100.mi.mun.ca/.

Catherine Lawton

Catherine Lawton is head of public services with the Dr. C.R. Barrett Library, Fisheries and Marine Institute of Memorial University.
“Tread softly here! Go reverently and slow! Yea, let your heart go down upon its knees. And with bowed head, and heart abased, strive hard to grasp the future gain in this sore loss! For not one foot of this dank sod but drank its surfeit of the blood of gallant men...”

These words by John Oxenham mark the entrance to Newfoundland Memorial Park in Beaumont-Hamel. Few verses have seared themselves into my memory as these have.

In the spring of 2000, my cousin Valerie and I travelled to the Western Front to visit war graves of Newfoundlanders and Canadians. It was a wrenching experience. I knew what we were there to see, but upon entering the first cemetery at the base of Vimy, on the very first stone, a Caribou. For that, somehow, I was not prepared. It was there, looking out from that cemetery, in every direction, and seeing more cemeteries, more Caribou and Maple Leaf, that I began to understand the enormity of the sacrifices of The Great War.

It is an unusual feeling when tears come unbidden for the loss of innocents, for heartfelt epitaphs, for the selfless sacrifice.

The visit to the Western Front inspired the creation of a “living memorial” in Bass River, N.S. With government funding, a willing committee and the support of the surrounding communities, The Cobequid Veterans Memorial Park was created. The park includes three gardens in the shape of a Celtic flower. The Garden of Sorrows, a stylized First World War trench; The Garden of Remembrance, a heritage garden; and The Garden of Hope, a colourful international garden, help fulfil our mission of education, remembrance and peace. The poem Tread Softly Here, from Beaumont-Hamel, is set at the entrance to the park.

On July 1, 2016, my partner, Carol, my step-daughter, Marlee, and I returned to Beaumont-Hamel for the centenary. At a reception prior to the ceremony, I presented Department of Veterans Affairs Minister Kent Hehr with a remarkable commemorative plaque titled "Ours." It features a poppy, the red petals made up of the names of Newfoundland Regiment soldiers who went over the top on July 1, 1916, and who were later counted as missing, wounded, or dead. At its centre, in black, are the names of those who answered roll call the next day.

Hundreds of fellow Newfoundlanders and Labradors attended the ceremony. Many made their pilgrimage to remember a loved one. For me, it was my great-uncle Arthur Stanley Thomas who went over the top 100 years ago.

It was a kind of mournful pride as once again the Newfoundlanders, over the hallowed ground of Beaumont-Hamel, tread softly.

With hope for enduring peace in our time.

Dr. Karen Ewing, B.Sc.’87, B.Ed.’88, B.Med.Sci.’90, MD’92

Dr. Karen Ewing is a family physician and the founder of Veterans Memorial Park in Bass River, N.S. All are welcome to visit the park in person or online at www.veteranmemorialpark.com. Karen is originally from St. John’s, N.L.

Opening of the Newfoundland Memorial Park, Beaumont-Hamel, France, 1925.
Sophie Peckford is the great-great-great niece of Pte. William Pennell.
Last fall my niece, Sophie, decided she wanted to do a family tree for her dad for Christmas. She discovered that she had two great-great-great uncles who were soldiers in the First World War — brothers William and Charles Pennell. Both enlisted in St. John’s with the Newfoundland Regiment in March 1915. After training, William was shipped overseas and was killed in action at Beaumont-Hamel. He was 22 years old and left behind a wife and son.

Through The Rooms’ online archives Sophie found a letter that William’s mother, Martha Ann, had written to the agent general for Newfoundland in London, England. In it she requested a photograph of her son’s grave in France. The letter was passed on to numerous people until finally the deputy colonial secretary responded to her.

He stated that while he would like to comply with the request, the rule had been that the memorial card went to the next of kin and, “of course one card only” was issued for each person. He explained that William had named his wife as his next of kin so the card was sent to her.

Dr. Sonya Corbin Dwyer, BA(Hons.)’91, B.Ed.’91

I teach at Corner Brook Regional High; Sophie was in my Canadian History class last year. She’s an absolute gem. So keen and bright.

It was a few months after we had taught the unit on the First World War, and I mentioned to the class there was an opportunity to enter First World War projects in the regional heritage fair held by the Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland and Labrador. This year, Ambassador Award students would be chosen from across the province as part of the Honour 100 program.

I told the students about my own trip to Beaumont-Hamel in 2015, also with the Honour 100 program, and what a powerful experience it was to see the graves of so many young men from the towns and communities we all know so well.

After class, Sophie asked me about the pictures I took on my trip and told me the story of her great-great-great grandmother’s request for a photograph. The name Pennell jumped out at me. That night, I found a photo of Pte. William Pennell’s gravestone that I had taken in Beaumont-Hamel, just by chance, from among hundreds of gravestones that line the cemetery. I sent it to Sophie’s mom.

As a family, they were emotional and overwhelmed by the coincidence.

Michelle Park, BA(Hons.)’93, B.Ed.’93

After I spoke to Ms. Park and saw her photo, I knew I had to go further and enter the regional heritage fair here in Corner Brook. The research I did was about my family, my great-great-great uncle William and his younger brother, Charles. It was all about their lives, what happened to them during the First World War, and the effect it had on the family back home.

My project won at the regional fair. That meant I would be travelling with a delegation of 18 other students from Newfoundland and Labrador on a tour of Europe to retrace the steps of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment.

I was the first member of our family to visit the places where my uncles died: Charles at Monchy-Le-Preux and William at Beaumont-Hamel. When I was there, I thought about what they saw, heard and experienced, and how it was so different from the way I experienced France. The beautiful memorials I visited were the muddy battlefields where they and their friends fought and died.

A few days before the 100th anniversary, we did a tour of Beaumont-Hamel, before the crowds of people all gathered at the site. This was when I got to visit my uncle’s grave. That was a really special moment, especially because I had anticipated it for so long. I laid a Newfoundland and Labrador flag at William’s headstone.

Sophie Peckford

Sophie Peckford is a Level II student at Corner Brook Regional High School; Michelle Park is a French immersion teacher at Corner Brook Regional High School; and Dr. Sonya Corbin Dwyer is a professor in the Department of Psychology at Memorial’s Grenfell Campus.
Neha Bhutani plays the euphonium in the Church Lads’ Brigade band.
've been a member of the Church Lads’ Brigade (CLB) band for four years, and it was about three years ago the idea for the Tour of Honour began to take shape. The idea was to be in Beaumont-Hamel for the 100th anniversary, to play at the ceremony on July 1 and to visit all of the Caribou monuments in Europe and play at those sites, as well.

It’s been an incredible journey. Everyone in the band was extensively involved in fundraising, and combined with our personal contributions, we made the trip a reality.

Looking back, it’s difficult to put the experience into words. Surreal is the only way I can describe being at Beaumont-Hamel this past July 1. I recall the feeling of coming in and out of moments of being there, realizing where we were standing and what we were looking at.

That day, after the official ceremony had ended, we continued to play a few hymns and other pieces while people were laying wreaths. One of those hymns was *God Be With You Till We Meet Again*. Our bandmaster, Capt. Albertine Bethel, told us that the band would play this song as soldiers were boarding the ships, getting ready to leave St. John’s as they went off to war. She said, “Play it for the boys, they haven’t heard it in a while.” It was quite an emotional moment.

A big part of this trip was about education, so that we could educate ourselves and others could learn about our history. Of course, the Regimental band only represents a small fraction of the CLB. In 1914 when the call for volunteers went out, the CLB membership responded without delay. In fact, it was the CLB building in St. John’s that served as the Regimental headquarters. So everyone who served with the Newfoundland Regiment, CLB member or not, would have passed under the stone arches that still stand in front of the building on Harvey Road.

Everyone always says we’re a family, a band family, the CLB family . . . but it’s even stronger now. I think after this experience we all appreciate things a little differently. We appreciate each other, the organization and what we’re doing that much more.

Neha Bhutani, BBA’13, MBA’15

*Neha Bhutani plays the euphonium in the CLB band. She works in project administration with the Core Science Facility Project Management Office at Memorial University.*
Five months prior to his 18th birthday, Pte. Howard Cutler enlisted. He was assigned regimental No. 899. He left his home in St. George’s, N.L. for St. John’s and embarked for England on March 20, 1915.

After some additional training, Howard was sent to France and on July 1, 1916, participated in the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel. Despite suffering severe injuries to his chest and back, he survived, and eventually recovered. He rejoined the regiment and was wounded again, this time in the Battle of Cambrai in November 1917. After a period of convalescence in Rouen, France, he returned to his regiment once more and was discharged in April 1919.

Howard returned to St. George’s and for a period of time he resided with my grandmother, who was his first cousin. He later obtained a position with the Newfoundland Postal Service and was assigned as a mailman on the S.S. Caribou.

In what many described as the most significant attack in Canadian waters during the Second World War, the S.S. Caribou was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine in the early hours of Oct. 14, 1942, about 65 kilometers away from its destination of Port-aux-Basques. Howard, along with 136 other crew members and passengers, would perish that night. His body was never recovered.

Howard narrowly escaped death on more than one occasion while fighting on the battlefields of France. Yet, only miles from his home, war surrounded him once more. The name Caribou and what it symbolized was a story he knew all too well, a ship emblematic of his old comrades-in-arms.

Walter Swyer, MUC’51

Walter Swyer started his career as a teacher in St. George’s, N.L. He later became an engineer, joined the Canadian Navy, and travelled extensively. Along the way he received two more degrees, both from MIT, including a master of ocean engineering. He retired from the Navy with the rank of lieutenant-commander and then resumed his teaching career for another 16 years in St. George’s, where he now lives.
or me, in the end, it is all about the faces. It is not the public pageantry, the precisely timed civic display of remembrance, as important as that is. It is the individual faces that implant themselves in my mind, the single soldier or nurse behind the vast, monumental event that was The Great War.

For me the most moving images of the Newfoundland Regiment in the war are not those of troops crowding the decks of the Florizel, or of soldiers marching through the cobbled streets of France, or even of weary men, hands clutching rifles, ready to clamber over the trench lip and into battle. It is rather the dozens of studio photographs taken of the platoons of young innocents, prior to being sent off and into the battlegrounds of Gallipoli and France. Some appear to have been taken later in the war at Garland Studio in St. John’s prior to embarkation for Europe, but the photographs I find most affecting were likely taken while the first recruits were in training in 1915, not long before Lord Kitchener’s announcement of the Regiment’s first assignment. “I am sending you to the Dardanelles!”

I believe these photographs make up some of the most profound portraits to ever come from this or any war. They are formal arrangements of a dozen or more Regiment men, in three rows — one standing, one seated on chairs or the arms of chairs, and a third row sitting cross-legged on the floor in front. The subjects are a mix of outport lads and corner boys, of merchant sons and cod fishermen, of store clerks and men who spent their days in the lumberwoods, of graduates of the dominion’s finest schools and men who couldn’t write their own names. The soldiers had obviously been told not to smile, to look their uniformed best for the folks back home. They showed their pride at having been fashioned into a hardened Newfoundland Regiment of fighting men.

They appear calm, as calm as their uncertain futures will allow. I detect a measure of apprehension in their eyes, a keenness tempered by having not yet been tested on the battlefield. I see the exuberance of youth held in check by the need to show their readiness for war. It would be just a few months to the time of their landing at Suvla Bay, and a year to their digging themselves into the trenches of the Somme. Their soldiers’ lives were all ahead of them. They had little notion of what to expect.

But what strikes me most of all is how they are just like faces we all know. Isn’t he the spit of that young fellow up the street? Didn’t he used to play football in Bannerman Park? Remember him from down the shore — by heavens, he was a strapping lad, he was. Each one of them looks like he could be a younger brother, a nephew . . . a son. My heart aches, as all our hearts do now, knowing that many of these men, in picture after picture, would not see the end of the war, would never find their way back across the sea to home. That we would come to know them as names on headstones and memorial plaques set into foreign soil.

It is sobering words we recite each July 1, each Nov. 11. We will remember them. Most surely we will, and think of them as the men they would have become had war not denied them the chance to live out their youth and to grow old, to have their photographs taken again and again.

Dr. Kevin Major, B.Sc.’73, Honorary D.Litt.’11

Dr. Kevin Major is one of Canada’s most celebrated authors, and has enjoyed a successful writing career that has spanned almost four decades. His award-winning work ranges across genres and has been adapted for stage and screen. His 1995 book, No Man’s Land, is widely considered to be required reading on the topic of the Newfoundland Regiment at Beaumont-Hamel. The Regiment also plays a part in his newest novel, Found Far and Wide, a section of which is set on the battlegrounds of Gallipoli. Born and raised in Stephenville, N.L., he now resides in St. John’s.
The college has been erected as a Memorial to those who fought and fell in the hope that by their sacrifice their country might be made a better and happier place for their fellow men. Can we doubt that those who strove to establish the college and succeeded in spite of all difficulties were inspired with that spirit of service, and is it not possible that the building itself... is not already endowed with that same spirit?

— St. John’s Evening Telegram, Sept. 16, 1925

The first students and staff of Memorial University College, 1925-26, in front of the original campus on Parade Street, St. John’s, N.L.
We owe you our freedom.

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