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MUSIC: Chorus paid tribute to fallen soldiers

NORTHUMBERLAND TODAY AUG. 11/15

TASS CORBIER - COLBORNE  
KATHY TENG - BRIGHTON (W.I.)

# Local voices were part of special European tour

CAROL EVANS

One hundred years ago in February 1915, the first contingent of the Canadian Expeditionary Force landed in France, after training in England.

Many did not see home again.

The North Lakeshore Chorus travelled to Europe between June 27 and July 11 to sing a 100th-anniversary musical tribute to the memory of the Canadians who served King and Country in the Great War of 1914-1918.

'Til the Boys Come Home was the name of the program presented to audiences in England, Belgium and France.

Producer Michael Korn of Toronto and associate producer Claire Shrage of Kingston worked for about a year to organize the tour. Ian Juby - chorus master of the Kingston Choral Society, conductor of the Kingston Capital Men's Chorus and director of the Limestone Choral - marked his third season as conductor of the North Lakeshore Mass Chorus. Accompanists Jacqueline Mokrzewski and Charles Willet, along with Garret Rodgers on bagpipes and 57 choristers from Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, made the journey to perform.

As well, Canadian pins and flags, poppies and programs were distributed at all venues, and wreaths laid at cemeteries and memorials. The program's repertoire included patriotic music such as the *Maple Leaf Forever*, *O' Canada*, *Our Canada from Sea to Sea* and such popular songs of the

zens killed on a beach by ISIS the previous Friday in Tunisia.

Despite a strike on the French side of the Dover-Calais ferry crossing, coaches carrying the group made it to Europe.

In Belgium, the chorus performed as part of the 29,997th Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres. On the memorial are inscribed the names of many Canadian soldiers who have no known grave. This monument opened in the late 1920s and, with the exception of the time of German occupation in the Second World War, the Remembrance ceremony has been performed every day at 8 p.m. It was truly an honour to participate in this moving tribute.

A visit was paid to the Ypres Salient, where Canadian soldiers were present at the first use of poison gas in April 1915. One cemetery visited was adjacent to the field dressing station at Essex Farm, where Lt. Col John McCrae wrote his well-known poem *In Flanders Fields* on May 3, 1915. At this location the choir carefully found a place to stand among the beautiful poppies blooming there and sang music of the same name as arranged by Alexander Tilley.

Tyn Cot cemetery was visited the same day in order to perform hymns and songs in tribute. This is the largest Commonwealth cemetery with more than 11,000 graves, where hundreds of Canadians died at the battle of Passchendaele. Many stones do not have names, a testament to the ferocity of battle, the lay of the land and the legendary mud dur-



SUBMITTED PHOTO  
Visiting the All Saints Parish Church in Kingston Upon Thames are the Northumberland members of the North Lakeshore Chorus - (back, from left) Ron Sargent, Alan Fletcher, Jane McGrath, Marley Budreau, Peter Thorpe, Heather Jansen, Florence Fletcher, Walter Fernhout (centre, from left) June Loader, Carol Evans, Tass Corbier, Kathy Teng, Dina Fernhout. (front, from left) Carol Hunt, Annabel Thorpe and Dierdre Finnan.