

Belgians' ceremonies of Remembrance impressed de Rabbie

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quite regularly, someone often becomes overwhelmed with emotion at that site. It's one of the most well-known sites for many Canadian soldiers, and it certainly had a huge effect on me."

Another moving experience was at the Menin Gate, in Ypers, Belgium.

"They hold a daily Service of Remembrance there at 8 p.m.," said de Rabbie. "I couldn't believe it— there were hundreds of people turning out to the services.

"You know, before I left, I thought we members of the Royal Canadian Legion had done a pretty good job of honouring and remembering our veterans over the years," said de Rabbie.

"But after seeing how much passion and dedication the Belgium people have, doing a Remembrance Day service, every day of the year— and peo-

ple come out in the hundreds, honouring 'our' veterans— well, I now know we Canadians have a ways to go before we catch up."

In Holland, the group visited Holten Canadian War Cemetery, which contains the graves of 1,382 Canadian soldiers of the Second World War.

During the 15 days of the trips, they performed numerous services of Remembrance, and de Rabbie acted as Sergeant at Arms for many of them. For some of the services, his wife Alice acted as part of the colour party as well.

"I must admit, I returned a changed man," said de Rabbie. "I have such an appreciation for the fallen Canadian soldiers and will never forget the things I felt and saw. At the same time, by sharing this experience with others in the group, we came to be almost like a big family. It's an experience that I know I will never forget. I'm so glad I went."



Top: George de Rabbie at the beach in Dieppe.



Right: Pilgrimage participants take part in the Service of Remembrance at the Menin Gate, Ypres, Belgium.

Photos courtesy George de Rabbie.

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