

*Thank You Veterans*



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# LEST WE FORGET Remembrance DAY 2021



## Living tribute to Canada's heroes

*By Mark and Ben Cullen*

July 12, 1940: This was the date of the first Canadian casualty in the Second World War. His name was Pilot Officer Duncan Alexander Hewitt, 501 Squadron Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, a 20-year-old native of New Brunswick.

Hewitt was one of 3,050 Canadians who were lost while serving during the war in the Air Force, and whose bodies were never found.

There is a tree planted in his honour on the section of Highway 401, known as the Highway of Heroes, as a part of the HoH Tree Campaign. The project was successfully launched more than seven years ago in the *Toronto Star*, and fulfilled by volunteers wishing to honour our war dead and give the environment a lift at the same time. We are active volunteer supporters of the campaign, and Mark is chair.

By planting 117,000 trees on the right of way of the Highway of Heroes, one for each Canadian lost at war since 1812, and more than 1.8 million more trees just off the highway, we acknowledge and remember Canadians who volunteered for military service during times of war. We are also combating the negative effects of human activity on our environment.

Thanks to many generous partners and donors, we have exceeded our initial goal to raise \$10 million to pay for the tree planting. By Remembrance Day, Nov. 11, 2022, we anticipate that all two million trees will be in the ground.

We will take what we have learned from the Highway of Heroes Tree Campaign, add the experience of our partner organization GrandTrees, and continue on to plant native trees and shrubs across the country. And in the beautiful new tradition of the HoH Tree Campaign, we will also create permanent, living acknowledgments of the great work and sacrifice made by Canadian heroes, including our military, and our front-line workers since

the pandemic started in March of last year.

What if we planted a tree for every doctor, nurse, personal care worker, paramedic, and more?

Through the federal Ministry of Natural Resources and the government's 2 Billion Trees program, we have a running start to our cam-

paign: \$2 million is committed by Ottawa to get our national tree-planting efforts off the ground. In addition, private donors have pledged more, and several industry professionals are willing to share costs and provide in-kind support to maximize our impact. This means that every donation to Trees For Life this year will be matched and we

will complete our goal of raising \$4 million in support provided to tree planting projects in 2021. But we need your help to do this.

We hope you agree, this is a compelling case for support for any Canadian who understands the environmental value of trees. If that is you, we urge you to visit [treesforlife.ca](http://treesforlife.ca). Soon, when we can physically connect, our partner organizations will be holding planting events that you can join.

*Mark and Ben Cullen are expert gardeners and contributors for the Toronto Star. Follow Mark on Twitter: @MarkCullen4 – Excerpt from the Cullen's advice column published in July 2021.*



**Corp. Nick Kerr has attended many Highway of Heroes tree-planting events to volunteer his time and skill with a shovel over the past few years.**  
*Photo courtesy www.MarkCullen.com*



**Duncan Alexander Hewitt was the first Canadian casualty in the Second.**  
*Photo courtesy Veterans Affairs Canada*



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