

# Reading and Remembrance 2009: Medals and Memories

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Since its inception in The Year of the Veteran in 2005, Reading and Remembrance ([www.readingandremembrance.ca](http://www.readingandremembrance.ca)) has attracted some 100,000 students and an astronomical number of visitors. In addition to providing educators with reading and arts-based materials for Remembrance Day, this collaborative project by the Durham West Arts Centre continues to draw new partners. In 2009, the Ontario Library Association and the Ontario Historical Society joined Ontario Power Generation, founding sponsor, to promote the project provincially.

Reading and Remembrance has been mentioned in federal parliament and twice had the involvement of Ontario's Lieutenant Governor. We've reached schools in every corner of the province. Because teachers tell us how excited students are to learn new facets of what Canadians should be proud to remember, we want to spread the magic further. Each year we search out stories that personalize Remembrance Day for young people. Educators may select materials from four archived themes: In Flanders Fields; Anti-Racism and Holocaust Education; Women and War; and Art of Dissent. Research is underway for ten totally bilingual lessons for Medals and Memories, the 2009 theme.

Some of the current lessons include Victoria Cross recipients; diversity in service from First Nations to new Canadians; fighting anti-Semitism; animals awarded the Dicken Medal ("the animals' V.C.": [www.rafpa.com/Dicken.html](http://www.rafpa.com/Dicken.html)); Canada's decorated female combatants; and the medals and memories of Canada's Cadets and Junior Rangers.

Pre-reading questions are suggested to create readiness, with prompts during the reading and viewing to stimulate analysis, and post-reading activities to

encourage explorations in writing, reading, research, and the arts. The site also has stand-alone readings and links to websites that provide Remembrance-related materials for teachers to follow their own lines of research.

The "value added" piece of the Reading and Remembrance site is the handy access to multiple resources in a format friendly to the Ontario curriculum. The lessons go well with Civics, History, English, Visual Arts, and a wide array of elementary curricula.

Although teachers may download the ready-to-use lessons for Remembrance Day or to use at any time during the year, the Project Managers ask them to sign up for the Reading and Remembrance Honour Roll. A high participation rate ensures continuing support to develop more student-centred resources. We also want to do that to promote a greater awareness of the values Remembrance Day represents for school-aged children.

To encourage participation, the website introduces a new interactive feature this year. Young people may submit the profile of a local veteran or current service person and teachers and librarians may submit a lesson.

"We've set an October 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline, as we hope that young people and professionals alike will add to the body of knowledge for this year's theme; we would like to see their research and reading validated through on-line publication," says Project Manager Mary Cook. The website has a submission template.

Shelagh Paterson, Executive Director of the Ontario Library Association states, "Libraries have participated in this project in the past. We want to step forward a little more this year to promote a project that places a high priority on reading, research, and community collaboration. There are memories of veterans in all communities served by public libraries and we want to stimulate the search for the reading materials that honour the men and women who created those memories."

Don Terry, Manager of Community Affairs, Pickering Nuclear Generating Station concludes, "This project models excellence in public education. We are proud to be the founding and continuing sponsor of a project that this year will reach even further into Ontario communities to support veterans, reading, history, and diversity." ■

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