

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
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Oshawa-Whitby student to retrace steps of Canadian soldiers *Laurier student selected to be on the first Cleghorn Battlefield Fellowships Tour in France*

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Contact: Mike Bechthold
Communications Director,
Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies
(519) 884-0710 ext. 4594

or Faye Clark
Public Affairs Assistant
(519) 884-0710 ext. 3217

WATERLOO – Oshawa-Whitby native Daniel Sosna will retrace the steps of Canadian soldiers – including his two grandfathers – who fought during the Second World War. Sosna will join seven other Laurier students next week on the first Cleghorn Battlefield Study Fellowships Tour in France.

Sosna has family ties to the Second World War through his grandfathers, Alexander Sosna and Malcolm Adam. The senior Sosna was a non-commissioned officer with the Russian Army who was captured twice. After escaping from the Germans, he was taken into American custody pending repatriation to Russia. He later escaped and, a few years later, he immigrated to Canada rather than return to Communist Russia.

Adam was a sergeant in 432 Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force and worked in the test and development division. He helped the war effort from the home front for the first three years, then was sent to England in March of 1943 and returned in March of 1945.

“Although my grandfathers played very different roles in the war effort, they each did what they were called upon to do and every soldier, from those who cooked the meals to those who bravely fought on the frontlines, deserves accolades for their contributions,” says Sosna. “I believe the tour will give me a greater appreciation of Canadian history and the sacrifices that all Canadians made during both World Wars.”

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Sosna is an undergraduate in economics and financial management going into his fourth year. He plans to pursue a law degree after graduation. The Cleghorn Fellows also include two master's students in history, Teresa Iacobelli and Michelle Fowler; three undergraduate honours history students, Elissa Marion, Evan Habkirk and Mary Duncan; and two undergraduate business students, Paul Wheaton and Drew Franklin.

The eight students will travel to Paris, France, on August 25. They will visit two of the major First World War memorials – Beaumont-Hamel and Vimy Ridge. They will then travel to Dieppe to study the beaches where Canadian soldiers landed in the infamous raid of August 19, 1942, and will stay overnight in a hotel that overlooks the beach.

They will also spend seven nights in Normandy, based just outside Bayeux. From there, the students will visit the most important Canadian battlefields, as well as D-Day sites such as Omaha Beach and the airborne landing areas. The tour returns to Paris on September 4 and ends in Toronto on September 6.

Throughout the two weeks, fellows will participate in daily on-site discussions and participate in tactical exercises without troops (TEWTs), which put the students into the shoes of those who fought for Canada.

The Cleghorn Battlefield Study Fellowships are funded by a generous donation from John Cleghorn, former chairman and chief executive officer of the Royal Bank of Canada and past chancellor of Wilfrid Laurier University, along with his wife, Pattie, and their children. The family donated \$1 million to Laurier last year to fund five initiatives, including the fellowships.

The Cleghorn Battlefield Study Fellowships program supports efforts to expose students to Canada's role in world conflicts by touring famous battlefields. The fellowships are designed to foster greater understanding of military history and, in particular, battles in which Canada played a significant role.

The Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies (LCMSDS) fosters research, teaching, and public discussion of military and strategic issues of national and international significance. Founded in 1991, LCMSDS supports classroom teaching and educational programs at Laurier in the departments of history, political science and mathematics. For more information, please visit www.canadianmilitaryhistory.com.