

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Battlefield tour commemorates 60th anniversary of WWII's end** *Tour will visit various battlefields, memorials and cemeteries in Belgium and Holland*

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WATERLOO – The Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies (LCMSDS) is organizing a tour of Canadian battlefields in Belgium and Holland to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. The tour runs from October 17 to 29 and is open to the general public.

Military historians Mike Bechthold and Lee Windsor will lead the tour and give participants a unique look at famous battlefields from the First and Second World Wars. The tour offers a view of major world events that is usually limited to historians and military scholars.

“Travelling to Europe and walking the battlefields really provides you with a rare opportunity to learn about both world wars,” said Bechthold, who is managing editor of Canadian Military History magazine. “Through this tour, veterans can relive and reflect on their wartime experience, friends and family can pay tribute to their loved ones who fought and younger people can put the war into a more realistic perspective.”

The tour begins in the Belgian city of Brugge. The group will explore the First World War battlefields around Ypres and Passchendaele and examine the Second World War operations to open the port of Antwerp.

Sites visited will include the Brooding Soldier, the Canadian First World War monument at St. Julien; Essex Farm Cemetery, where John McCrae wrote In Flanders Fields; and Tyne Cot Cemetery, the largest British Commonwealth cemetery in the world.

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The tour will then move to the historic city of Arnhem, Holland, the key city in Operation Market Garden, made famous in the movie *A Bridge Too Far*. The group will also visit the Canadian battlefields in the German Rhineland and follow the route of the Canadian army as it liberated Holland in April and May 1945.

The tour is limited to 35 people on a first-come, first-served basis. It costs \$3,575 per person (based on double occupancy). This includes return airfare from Toronto, ground transportation, accommodations, daily breakfast, a farewell dinner (on October 28), local sightseeing and touring.

All participants on the tour will also receive a copy of *The Canadian Battlefields in Northwest Europe: A Visitor's Guide*, written by Bechthold and noted military historian Terry Copp.

The tour is being offered in association with the Canadian Battlefields Foundation. The foundation undertakes programs to commemorate and promote public awareness of Canada's role in the Second World War and other wars of the 20th century.

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 on the tours, including a detailed itinerary and booking forms, visit [www.canadianmilitaryhistory.com](http://www.canadianmilitaryhistory.com).