

Week to honour vets is declared

In recognition of the achievements and sacrifice of Canadians during wartime and in peacekeeping operations around the world, Nov. 5 to 11, 1997 has been declared Veterans' Week.

One aim of Veterans' Week is to bring the stories and lessons from Canada's wartime experience to today's youth.

The Internet has proven to be a valuable tool for creating these links to the past.

Two special Internet-related activities developed by Veterans Affairs Canada include an on-line scavenger hunt where students surf the net, searching for facts on Canada's wartime involvement, and a home page design contest for the Veterans Affairs Canada web site.

In addition to web site activities, Veterans Affairs Canada has prepared several other materials for use in the classroom including: a set of postcards which students can send to Canadian veterans and peacekeepers around the world, an activity sheet designed for younger children that includes information and games designed to promote remembrance, and a quiz based on Canada's wartime experience.

Every year, Veterans Affairs Canada designs and produces a Remembrance Day Poster which is sent to schools across the country.

This year's version features "Holding at Kapyong," and "Daybreak, Gulf of Korea," paintings by artist and Korean War veteran, Edward Zuber.

In addition to these items for young people, numerous other activities will be held across the country during Veterans' Week for Canadians of all ages to pay tribute to Canada's veterans and peacekeepers.

This is the third consecutive year the federal government has officially declared the week preceding Remembrance Day as a week to pay tribute to Canada's war veterans.

This year there is a special focus on Canada's involvement in the Korean War from 1950 to 1953. Canadian forces were part of a United Nations force and some 26,791 Canadians served in that war.

In total, more than 341,000 Canadians were killed or wounded during the two World Wars and the Korean War.

Some of those who served were awarded the Victoria Cross for extraordinary acts of bravery.

That top VC decoration is given "for most conspicuous bravery, or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy."

Only 94 veterans have been awarded the VC, and of those, only two are alive today, Vancouver's Charles Cecil Ingersoll Merritt and another B.C. veteran, Ernest Alvia Smith.

The Veterans Affairs Canada web site address is www.vac-acc.gc.ca

To phone Veterans Affairs for more information, call 1-800-387-0919.

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