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Canada's Great War on Film *Lest We Forget* (1935)

Tim Cook

Lest We Forget will “stand out in the history of filmdom.” *Ottawa Evening Journal*¹

“Dress Up to See the Slaughter.” *Ottawa Citizen*²

Lest We Forget “comes at a very opportune time, with the threat of a new holocaust fanning the flame of patriotic spirits to consider the price that war demands from civilization.” *London Evening Free Press*³

Lest We Forget was Canada's official Great War film. It sparked controversy when it was shown across the country in 1935, during the midst of the worst depression in Canadian history, and with a growing anxiety over the increased aggression of international dictators. The film provided a contested venue for what the Great War had meant to a generation of Canadians. But this was no ordinary war film. Officially sanctioned and constructed from archival wartime footage, the story of Canada's war was told in 100 minutes, from the opening phases through to the grim fighting on the Western Front, and including those who supported the soldiers from home. Many journalists, politicians, and veterans called *Lest We Forget* the most authentic film to have appeared since the end of the war, especially in contrast to Hollywood fictional productions.

This article examines the conflicting discourse surrounding *Lest We Forget*. While the official film, what we would now call a documentary, provided important insight into the war, and how it would be remembered, it probably tells us more

about the 1930s than the period from 1914 to 1918. But this is only one part of the story.

Canada's Great War film history remains largely unexplored.⁴ Where did this film footage come from? Who filmed Canadians on the battlefield? How did these cameramen work within the deadly environment of shrapnel, snipers, and poison gas? How was the film footage received during and after the war? To better understand the importance of *Lest We Forget*, it is not just the film and the public's reaction to it that must be analysed, but also the footage that was used to underpin the narrative.

* * * * *

When Britain was at war, Canada was at war. The heady days of August 1914 were marked with celebration and excitement as Canadians clamoured to serve King and country. More than 30,000 enlisted in the First Contingent and were headed overseas by October; they were to be joined by almost 400,000 more in the coming years. Most would fight in the Canadian Corps.



The Canadians suffered through the trial-by-fire battles of Ypres, St. Eloi, Mount Sorrel and the Somme in the first two years of the war. From 1917 onward, however, the Corps won a string of victories at Vimy, Hill 70, Passchendaele, and during the Hundred Days campaign. The Canadians were forced to adapt as they passed through the meat grinder of the Western Front. Along with this costly road to professionalism, there was an emerging sense of distinctiveness, especially in relation to British forces. But this did not happen by chance. The Canadian Corps had an active publicity campaign throughout the war.

The organization behind this promotion was the Canadian War Records Office (CWRO), headed by Sir Max Aitken, later Lord Beaverbrook, an expatriate Canadian millionaire with close ties to military and political leaders in both Canada and Britain. With characteristic passion, Aitken employed his considerable skills as a press baron, Member of Parliament, and influential peer to

nurture a campaign of extolling the heroic deeds of Canadians. Journalistic features accentuating Canadian exploits, the commissioning of artists and photographers to craft Canadian-content works, the creation of commemorative journals, and even the publication of the first popular war histories all helped to shape a distinctive Canadian identity. Largely at his own discretion, but also supported by Prime Minister Robert Borden and Minister of Militia and Defence Sam Hughes, Aitken's plan, when combined with the very real accomplishments of the Corps on the battlefield, enshrined the Canadians' reputation as elite troops and as a distinctive group within the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). Aitken used film to support his dual mandate of publicizing his countrymen, while at the same time gathering and preserving war records that would be employed by future generations of historians to interpret the Great War's legacy.

Film was not a new medium. It had attracted growing audiences since the turn of the century, as it brought stories and images to the public, transporting the viewer through time and space. Undercutting live theatre and music halls, "going to the pictures" was a weekly ritual for thousands in Canada, and millions around the world: indeed, by the summer of 1916, more than twenty million tickets were being sold each week in England alone.⁵ With pictures embraced by all levels of society, film was seen as a unique tool for reaching the masses. The importance of the cinema was not lost on the CWRO's senior officers, who noted in one memorandum regarding propaganda that film "might indeed almost have been invented for the purpose."⁶

As Canadians enlisted by the thousands in the first two years of the war, throngs of their community members came out to see them as they marched, drilled, or entrained for their camps, and then went overseas. Film producers were obviously interested in the pageantry and spectacle of the events. When the exuberant and vain Sam Hughes visited Victoria, British Columbia to inspect troops in January

Sir Max Aitken (later Lord Beaverbrook) with an unidentified woman, 1916. Beaverbrook was dedicated to promoting the Canadians, but remained an important player in the political and social scene in London, England.



1915, he encountered D.J. Dwyer, an American cinematographer, who had been hired to film the 30th Battalion. The minister was impressed by some of the films – especially those that captured him strutting around and barking orders. Yet not all were pleased with the idea of posing for the cameras, and Captain Harry Crerar, a future army commander, recounted bitterly a similar review in a downpour of rain “for Sam Hughes’ benefit and for moving picture operators. A damn nuisance and a waste of time.”⁷

Hughes thought otherwise and gave Dwyer an honorary title of lieutenant. At his own expense, the cinematographer was ordered to England to film the Canadians then training on Salisbury Plain, with the understanding that all of his film would later be transferred to the Public Archives as a permanent record.⁸ The notoriously reserved British War Office allowed Dwyer, as Hughes’s representative, to document the Canadians, but he also free-lanced throughout other training camps.⁹ *Canada’s Fighting Forces* (1915), his film of the Canadian Division and its inspection by the King and Lord Kitchener before it was sent to France, was shown throughout the Empire. It was a commercial success. But aside from the appeal of seeing the King and other dignitaries, who were popular at all times, there was little military footage other than ubiquitous training shots, aircraft flying, and a glimpse of hospitalized soldiers.

In Britain, at the time, film production remained with private newsreel companies, but they were restricted in what they could cover, and always censored heavily. For greater influence, they organized themselves into the British Topical Committee for War Films in October 1915, and succeeded in negotiating an agreement with the restrictive War Office to have access to the front lines. But it was an unhappy relationship, and the War Office was never comfortable in giving up control of information. In early 1916, it established the War Office Cinema Committee to coordinate all films within the British Expeditionary Force (BEF).¹⁰ Sir Max Aitken would eventually be appointed to chair this committee, but before that he was attempting to carve out a reputation for the Canadians.

Aitken had been appointed as Eye Witness for the Canadian forces in January 1915, duly reporting back to Ottawa on military and political

matters.¹¹ But Aitken had proven throughout his 36 years that he could always exploit a situation to his advantage, in business or his personal life, and so he expanded his power in the confusing structure of the overseas Canadian forces where there were, at one time, six generals in various competing commands.¹² Along with his political machinations in Britain’s Tory party, Aitken’s goal as Eye Witness, and later Records Officer (to which he was appointed in early 1916), was simple: “to follow the fortunes of the First Division in France, to share its experiences, and to give the public of Canada an account of the performances of its regiments, and finally to enshrine in a contemporary history those exploits which will make the First Division immortal.”¹³

He had done this first by writing laudatory newspaper accounts that were published in Canada and throughout the Empire, and then authoring *Canada in Flanders* (1916), a best-selling history that highlighted the heroics of the Canadian Division during the bloody and costly Battle of Second Ypres in April 1915. Aitken had indeed begun to fulfill his mandate of both documenting and popularizing the Canadian war effort.¹⁴

Aitken also influenced the creation of war records in order to lay down the “bedrock of history.”¹⁵ With his Canadian War Records Office, an organization that he established in January 1916 and initially paid for out of his own pocket, he employed wounded soldiers or over-aged men to document the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF).¹⁶ Historical officers were sent into the field to gather documents and influence soldiers to create better records; this they did, and after the 1916 Somme battles, the CWRO’s intervention improved the quality and scope of the War Diaries.¹⁷ But Aitken was also anxious to present the war to Canadians at home, those who worried and waited for loved ones.

To do this, however, Canadians needed more than evocative newspaper accounts or vivid histories. Aitken pushed for greater coverage of the war effort through war art, photography, and film in the summer of 1916. The War Office fought him tooth and nail. But Aitken was a powerful figure and had unique rights as Canada’s Eye Witness. He refused to back down, enlisting allies in England and Canada; yet, as he noted wryly later in the war, while still trying to profile

Canadian actions, “the spirit was willing but the censorship was by no means weak.”¹⁸ With his considerable influence, he manoeuvred around the War Office’s objections and soon had war artists, photographers, and cinematographers working to document the Canadians on the Western Front.

Having missed capturing the first year and a half of the war on film, Aitken instructed the CWRO to purchase existing footage from local companies and gather Dwyer’s films. But Dwyer had plans to follow up on the success of his earlier film. After bitter accusations, Dwyer escaped to Canada with his films, but Aitken, furious that the cinematographer was profiting from the service of other Canadians, used his influence to ban Dwyer from returning to England in an official capacity.¹⁹ Without this material, though, the CWRO had only limited footage of Canadians training in England. It was essential to get cameramen to the front to fulfil Aitken’s twin mandates of publicizing and documenting his countrymen in battle.

By the summer of 1916, Lieutenant F.O. Bovill, a British artillery driver with some film experience, was embedded in the CEF. He filmed the Somme battles later that year. The footage was a stunning success, with Bovill capturing blasted landscapes, marching soldiers, lumbering tanks, and artillery fire. It was later edited to produce a commercially successful film, *Canadian Victory at Courcellette* (1917). “The value of the exhibition of these films in Canada can hardly be over-stated, while their presentation in neutral countries throughout the world will enormously enhance the knowledge and renown of Canada,” Aitken crowed to Borden.²⁰

The films indeed brought attention to the Canadian war effort, and the Deputy Minister of Militia and Defence, Eugene Fiset, believed they were important tools to support morale and “serve as an effective antidote to the poison of German war pictures” then circulating in neutral United States.²¹ But not all agreed that unfettered knowledge of overseas action was useful. The strict censorship rules emanating from the government’s chief press censor, Ernest Chambers, meant that some of the harsher images in the films were not presented to the Canadian public for fear of affecting enlistment.²² Chambers hoped to reduce the shock of war even

though wounded veterans and uncensored letters were still finding their way back to Canada.²³ There were also a number of films produced domestically that extolled citizens to ration their food or support the war effort through the patriotic purchase of war bonds.²⁴ Despite the censors’ efforts, the war was coming home to Canada.

The CWRO film footage also drew widespread attention in England. Critics complained that Aitken’s media blitz of publications, photographs, war art, and film made it appear that only the Canadians were fighting on the Western Front.²⁵ The film footage was especially prevalent, and CWRO reports noted sheepishly that “there are a disgruntled few who think the Canadians’ cameras and films have been too busy.” It was, to some, a “crusade by camera.”²⁶

When Aitken created his own separate Canadian cinematography committee in July 1916, the War Office was quick to notice the Dominion competition with their already established network. Shortly thereafter, a joint British-Canadian Cinematograph Committee was formed with Sir Max as its chairman. The committee produced the *War Office Official Topical Budget*, two eight-minute films each week that were passed by military censors and then distributed throughout the Empire, usually shown before or in between longer theatre shows. Aitken appointed the Honourable J.W. Smith, former Managing Director of Barker Motion Photographing Company, to ensure that “Canadian interests were safeguarded.”²⁷ On direct orders from Aitken, Canadian footage was included in every weekly picture, something no other Dominion could claim.

It was thus the role of the field cinematographers to supply the Committee with suitable Canadian images. Unfortunately, after Bovill’s excellent first shots of the Somme battles, he was unable to replicate his success. The Canadian Corps processed the hard-won lessons of the Somme over the winter of 1916-17 in elaborate training programs, but also engaged in an active policy

Opposite: Canadian official photographer on the Western Front, September 1916. Note the difficulty of filming on the open battlefield with no cover. Cameramen and cinematographers were often forced to trade distance for safety.

of trench raiding. These stealth operations were almost always carried out at night, and were nearly impossible to capture on film. Bovill shot new footage in early 1917, and claimed to have succeeded in filming some raids, but was later forced to admit the film did not turn out due to poor lighting.²⁸

Bovill's failure was exacerbated by his inability to secure good footage at Vimy Ridge. During this coming-of-age battle in April 1917, where the four Canadian divisions fought together for the first time and drove the Germans from their formidable position on the ridge, Bovill's weak footage indicated damningly that he had stayed in the rear areas. With only footage of troops moving forward and artillery batteries in action, it was clear that Bovill had not advanced with the infantry. The limitations of the fragile hand-cranked cameras no doubt hurt his ability to keep up with spearhead units, but it appeared that he had not even tried to document the battle at the sharp end. Aitken was furious that Bovill had failed him, and all Canadians, writing that the footage was "absolutely worthless."²⁹ But Bovill survived as a cameraman, continuing to shoot footage of Canadian and British troops, even though he consistently produced poor work. That he was used as a cameraman throughout the war spoke more to the lack of experienced cinematographers than to Aitken's generosity.³⁰

The art of filming was still relatively new and there had been few indigenous Canadian companies engaged in the work. Lord Beaverbrook, as Sir Max Aitken was known after receiving his peerage at the end of 1916, turned to the larger BEF and, attesting to his influence, was able to secure a number of British cameramen. Bovill was placed in a secondary role and J.A.B. MacDowell, considered one of the best cameramen of the war, took over the role of documenting the Canadians in 1917. Geoffrey Malins, Walter Buckstone, and Frank Bassill also travelled the front looking for suitable Canadian shots to meet the film mandate.

Officers generally cooperated with the cameramen, and most liked the idea of appearing on film. One artilleryman recounted in his diary towards the end of the war: "Some excitement was caused when a Canadian moving picture outfit came and took movies of 'A' gun in action.... They had us all dressed up with the hats and gas respirators on, things we didn't ordinarily wear while on gun duty, although we kept them handy."³¹ Posing was not uncommon for both still and moving film, with most soldiers and few cameramen worrying about questions of authenticity. Yet not all soldiers agreed with this publicity campaign. Lieutenant-Colonel Agar Adamson of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry wrote disdainfully to his wife of Talbot



Papineau, one of his former officers, who was then working for the CWRO:

Papineau turned up two days ago with a cinematographic camera and wanted us to pose for him. I suggested he take photographs of the graves of the fallen and ordered him out of the line as I did not think it fitting in the present critical situation that officers should be going about with a Punch and Judy Show....My views are not shared by many Commanding Officers, who are only too anxious to advertise themselves and rehearse all kinds of stunts when they heard they were coming, such as reading maps, giving orders, pretending to be shot and carried off on stretchers. I only hope the camera gets smashed.³²

The dour Adamson was definitely in the minority and much of the surviving war film consists of smiling soldiers, often waving for the camera. Yet powerful and poignant film was shot, and often when soldiers did not realize they were in the camera's lens.

But cooperation did not ease the ongoing problem of securing combat footage: cameramen were just as likely to take a bullet in the head as an infantryman who looked above a trench parapet. With battles going in at night, at dawn and, by 1917, behind massive creeping barrages of high explosives and shrapnel, sometimes there was nothing to see but dust and debris. A number of minor Canadian operations in the summer of 1917 were filmed but produced little useable footage.³³

L. McLeod Gould of the 102nd Battalion described the difficulty of the photographers and cameramen in capturing the war on film. While the 102nd planned to attack a series of German trenches known as the Triangle, east of Vimy Ridge in the summer of 1917, Gould noted,

For the benefit of many who believe that the moving-pictures taken under the auspices of the Canadian [War] Records Office are 'faked' it may here be related that during this tour the official photographer appeared at Battalion Headquarters one evening an hour before a double offensive was due. He had been sent up in view of the importance of these operations and requested to be forward up the line....When the action started the shelling was so terrific on both sides that it was impossible to see ten yards in any direction, dry mud was being blown from two to three hundred feet in the air, and this, with the smoke, made everything as dark as night.³⁴

The photographer returned to Battalion command headquarters without any shots, but he had been in the front lines. Other experienced cameramen like Geoffrey Mallins tried to film the Canadians in battle, but much of his footage was considered a "complete failure" by the CWRO and Lord Beaverbrook.³⁵

After several months of shooting, J.A.B. MacDowell was getting desperate, and began to expose himself dangerously during the 1917 Passchendaele offensive. But with bullets and shrapnel raining down around him, he was forced to admit again that since the attacks went in under darkness, there was little hope of capturing the experience of battle on film. It got no easier in the last year of the war, and the series of Allied hammer blows against the crumbling German armies in the campaigns that made up the Hundred Days (August to November 1918) were equally difficult to shoot. But the footage for this period was far stronger, with images of advancing soldiers, tanks, artillery, and aircraft. Yet still the fighting eluded the cameramen who remained constrained by their cumbersome and unwieldy equipment, and the nature of combat. Most of the film footage was shot behind the lines, away from danger.

Beaverbrook and the CWRO were forced to settle for these shots to fulfil the publicity and record-keeping functions. In the summer of 1918, moreover, Beaverbrook ordered a full-length Canadian film to be produced. *The Battle of Courcellette* (1918) was shot by W.R. Boothe, directed by Smith, and distributed by the CWRO in Britain and, ultimately, to Canadian theatres. Recreations were mixed with real film footage; maps and diagrams of the Canadian divisional advances were juxtaposed to create the image of "victory succeed[ing] victory."³⁶ It was a resounding success. The equally popular, *The Taking of Vimy Ridge* (1919), was shown across Canada the next year.³⁷

Lord Beaverbrook's films were acknowledged as a propaganda coup.³⁸ By the end of the war, there were two full-length Canadian films, nine shorts and thousands of feet of additional footage that had been supplied to the British cinematography committee to be used in imperial productions. When the profits were tallied, a £10,000 cheque was awarded to the Canadian government, which was double that received by

the Australians and New Zealanders because Beaverbrook's men had shot and contributed more footage.³⁹ Beaverbrook's patronage had been responsible primarily for this success: his quest to make the Canadian actions of the war known widely had paid both financial and publicity dividends at little cost to Canadians, while leaving a legacy of historical film for future generations.

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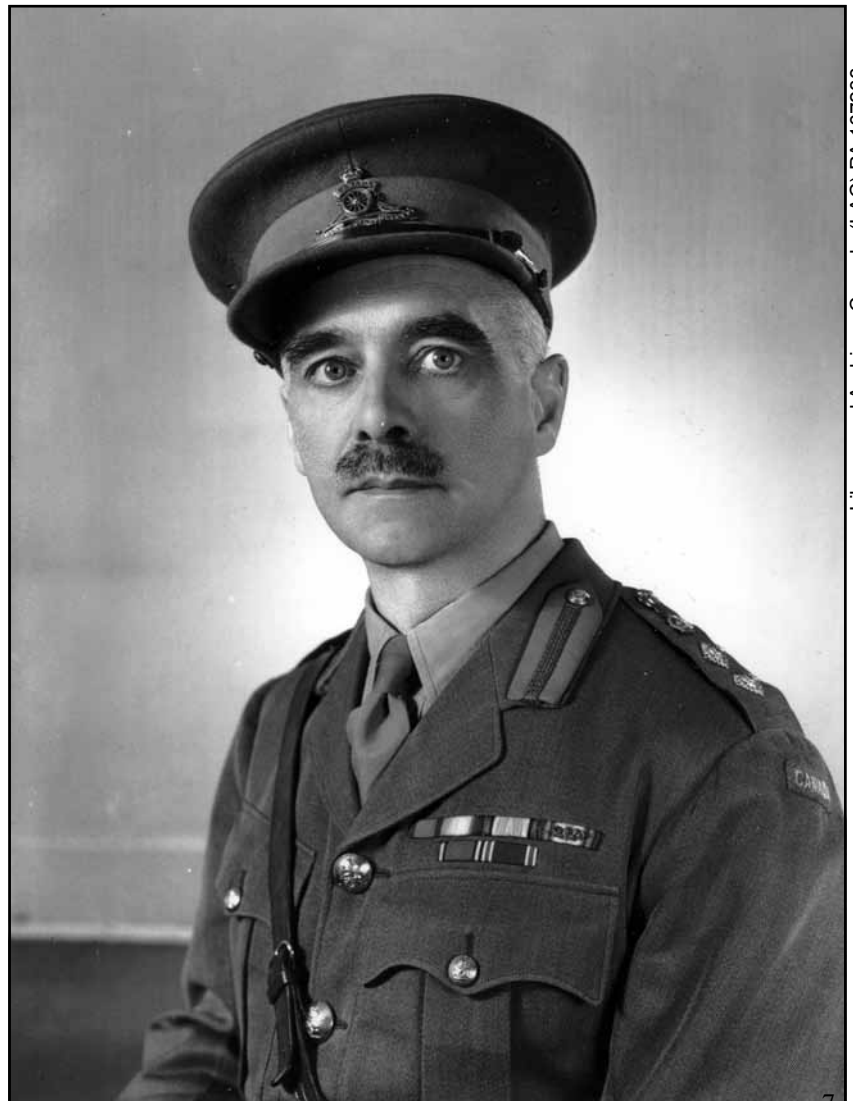
As the citizen-soldiers were being repatriated home in early 1919, one Canadian commentator acknowledged that it was Beaverbrook's foresight and hard work that had provided "a national record of inestimable historical value."⁴⁰ Indeed, Beaverbrook's war art, photographs, and film form the core of the war's visual language. But just as there were plans for a war museum to house the impressive war art collection and an official historian to codify the war in print, Beaverbrook had hoped that there would also be an official war film so that Canadians could "see what their brothers, husbands, and sons did during the Great War."⁴¹ However, it would be almost two decades before Canadians would again see the footage.

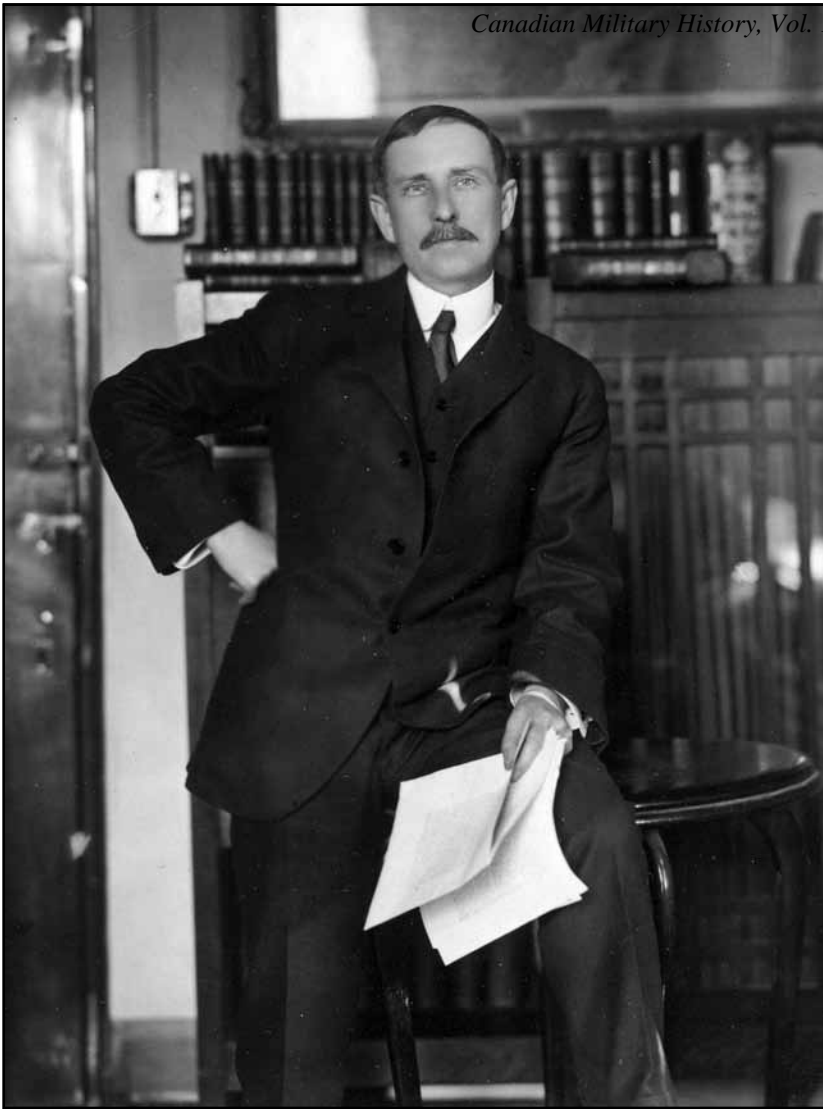
When Beaverbrook's British cinematography committee was closed and the film rights sold for a profit in 1919, those films relating to Canada were sent back to the Army Historical Section (AHS) in Ottawa. But there were no cinematographical experts on staff at the AHS and the cans of film were deposited in the archives to gather dust alongside the textual records. No one even inspected them. When they were finally examined by the official historian, Colonel A.F. Duguid, three years later, he found to his surprise that most of the films were positives and scratched beyond repair. No copies could be made from them in their pitiful condition, and the film was already beginning to break down under the fluctuating heat and humidity within the archives.⁴² As well, many films appeared to be missing. That same year, after some

Colonel A.F. Duguid, official historian. Duguid believed passionately in memorializing the Canadian war effort, but had no experience with film.

of the CWRO film surfaced at a local theatre, Duguid organized a nationwide search to locate additional film. A number of British films, like the *Battle of Arras* (1917), were found and added to the collection, but not the important Canadian footage.

The Legion was alerted to the situation and posted advertisements to its members, but very soon it, and other wartime patriotic institutions, like the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, were pressuring Duguid to allow the existing film to be shown at various branches or reunions. Duguid demurred, writing to J.H. MacBrien, chief of the general staff, that these valuable archival records had to be preserved and restored before anyone could use them. The Legion continued to appeal to the AHS: with a war museum and the multi-volume official history delayed, the former until 1942, the latter never completed, an official film, argued veterans, would help to stir old memories and provide a proper memorial to their deeds and that of their fallen comrades.





Arthur Doughty, Dominion Archivist. During the war, Doughty had gone overseas to collect war trophies; afterwards, he distributed many of them throughout the country as symbols of Canada's war effort. He was a driving force in presenting *Lest We Forget* to Canadians.

\$350,000. Furthermore, a confusing and, in parts, racy story that attempted to portray both the comedy and tragedy of war – and failed at both, when combined with the misfortune of being released just when the first “talkies” were hitting the screen, resulted in an expensive fiasco.⁴⁵ It nearly destroyed the emerging Canadian film industry and put paid to an official war film.

However, in the aftermath of *Carry on Sergeant!*, the Department of National Defence contacted Doughty in April 1929 to enquire about the “priceless historical” film records, and what could be done about them. Doughty, Duguid, and F.C. Badgley from the Government Motion Picture Bureau (GMPB), the precursor organization to the National Film Board, organized a committee to study the film issue. They determined that conservation had to be carried out immediately since the films were “worse than anyone thought.” Many of the original films had also been cut up and their provenance destroyed by editing different parts together. More problematic were the significant gaps in the film collection, which former CWRO members confirmed after seeing the existing footage.⁴⁶ Conservation was begun but important footage remained lost.

In 1926, to avoid increasing demands, Duguid transferred the archival film collection of 144 separate reels, more than 30,000 feet of footage, to the Dominion Archivist, Arthur Doughty, for “preservation and safe-keeping.”⁴³

But Canadians continued to show an interest in the Great War, even if they preferred romanticized novels to the war poetry and fiction that questioned the futility of the trenches. The cartoons of Bruce Bairnsfather and his lovable ‘Ol’ Bill,’ the “everyman” who represented the “poor bloody infantry,” remained far more popular than the poetry of Wilfrid Owen or Siegfried Sassoon.⁴⁴ Attesting to Bairnsfather’s enduring appeal, and with successful London and Broadway plays under his belt, he was enticed to make a major Canadian-produced film, *Carry on Sergeant!* (1928).

Despite Bairnsfather’s international success, a cartoonist does not make a director. Cost overruns drove up the budget to an incredible

The dark years of the Depression were painful for most Canadians and, as R.B. Bennett’s government struggled to deal with the unprecedented economic collapse, plans for an official war film were again side-lined. Even the Legion was preoccupied with petitioning support for suffering veterans. But there was a turn of fate in early 1933 as George Drew, an artillery veteran and politician, was rummaging through basement vaults at the Ontario Motion Picture Bureau. He came across tins of celluloid and they were shown at his brigade’s reunion dinner that night. With the gunners reliving old memories as the black and white images flickered across the screen, the chief of the general staff, A.G.L. McNaughton, also a Great War gunner, remarked: “I’ll be swizzled.... Those are the ruddy things we’ve been looking

for.”⁴⁷ Drew had uncovered 25,000 feet of lost Canadian footage. The newspapers reported widely that the “long lost war films” had been uncovered, and there was a renewed push to have these “authentic pictures of warfare” shown to all Canadians. The official footage, newspaper men intoned, would counter the untruthful scenes presented “from the screen of Hollywood and elsewhere.”⁴⁸

Bennett responded to this pressure from veterans, politicians, the media, and even the Governor General, by forming another committee shortly after the gunner’s dinner. Doughty, McNaughton, Duguid, and Badgely examined tens of thousands of feet of film for a possible official production. Yet as the committee carried out their work, Bennett’s Cabinet worried that a war film might spark unwanted passions among citizens suffering through the Depression. Moreover, the peace movement of the 1920s, which had rallied around the mantra of the “war to end all wars,” would not stand for any glorification of the conflict. Bennett and his Cabinet felt an official war film could be a combustible spark that might set the country’s veterans against the peace movement. But the veterans could not be ignored, especially since they had powerful influence in the House of Commons and the Cabinet.

Doughty’s committee examined 60,863 feet of footage in order to select about 9,000 feet (two hours) for a film. Captain William Douglas, a CWRO veteran and employee with the GMPB, selected film clips from 685 films of varying lengths, while W.W. Murray, another CEF veteran, wrote the script. A musical score was commissioned. Douglas reported that there were powerful and evocative shots, but no footage that showed any front line fighting. In telling Canada’s Great War history, the official film would be constrained by what Beaverbrook’s cameramen had shot during the war.

It was equally difficult to craft the film’s message. By the 1930s, the memory of the Great War had become far more contested with the release of antiwar books, of which Erich Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) remained the best known. The Academy award-winning film of the same name also stimulated a new approach to tackling the Great War on film, and especially the suffering of the common soldier.⁴⁹ But much of the CWRO’s

footage had focused on battles, generals and politicians, and there were no interviews and few highlights of individual soldiers. How would Canadians accept this lack of coverage?

There was the possibility of filming new scenes, but this was condemned by the committee since it would detract from the authenticity of the original records. To hold the title, official, the film would have to be based on real footage. Most of it was, although there was some realistic wartime recreated segments, like the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. However, this footage was indicated at the start of the film as a “faithful reproduction according to the historical record.”⁵⁰ To help augment the film, moreover, the committee was able to draw upon British, French, and German footage, some of which was in the Canadian collection. The committee also aimed to place the Canadian war effort within the larger Allied campaigns, and there was a conscious attempt to avoid the “impression that Canada won the war.”⁵¹ McNaughton ordered that the film avoid the “‘heroes’ sort of thing or sob stuff,” but it also had to have, Badgely noted, a “theatrical punch or it won’t go over” with the public.⁵² The film was cut and edited; the script written and rewritten.

Yet still Bennett’s Cabinet worried about how the film would be received, and while Donald Sutherland, the minister of national defence, pushed hard for the film’s authorization, assuring the prime minister that there would be no “glorification of war,” and that it was the government’s duty to show these “valuable records” lest they be “lost to posterity,” many other ministers feared the war and its contested memory. It had been too divisive and painful, and none wanted to remind Canadians that it had been Conservatives who had enacted conscription.⁵³

The authorization to release the film was a near run thing and the Cabinet was still against it even after a private showing. But veterans in Bennett’s government rallied behind the cause. McNaughton even went so far as to warn the prime minister that “we may expect a great volume of serious criticism” if the film is further delayed.⁵⁴ Some of the contentious images were struck from the film, like dismembered bodies, as well as the question of “fixing the blame for the outbreak of the war directly on Germany.”⁵⁵

Additional last minute changes included adding more material relating to the patriotic war work on the home front, especially the role of women.⁵⁶ A final letter by Doughty to the Cabinet won the case: "The picture...depicts scenes of self-sacrifice and heroism, of devoted sacrifice and of patriotic effort, and will lay before those who see it a heritage of tradition of self forgetfulness and of loyalty which has been wrought into the fabric of the life of Canada. It portrays the stark reality of War, its futility and its terrors, so that this method of settling disputes between nations may be dreaded and avoided."⁵⁷ After months of debate, the Cabinet finally acted decisively: it transferred responsibility for the film to the Legion. The official war film would be released to Canadians in March 1935, under the title of *Lest We Forget*.

* * * * *

Despite the Cabinet's caution and delay in authorizing *Lest We Forget*, it is perhaps not surprising that most of its members were in attendance for the film's opening night at the Princess Theatre in Ottawa on 7 March 1935. The Legion was hosting the event, but dignitaries like the Governor General, Bennett, and senators joined veterans. "The Gala Performance promises to be the outstanding social event of the Ottawa season," predicted one newspaper.⁵⁸ Attesting to the pageantry of the evening, veterans were given permission to wear their uniforms at the performance.

Brigadier-General Alex Ross, Dominion president of the Legion, opened the ceremonies by reminding the packed crowd that the picture opening was not a "social event," as some of the newspapers had made it out to be, but rather a "solemn occasion, long desired by the veteran body of Canada, which has

felt it necessary that war be portrayed in all its stark reality." And that stark reality could be shown because there was a "complete historical narrative of the war compiled from the archives of allied and enemy nations, as well as from our records, so that those who see may understand its genesis, its progression, and its terrible aftermath." The official film would contrast favourably, he claimed, with Hollywood fictional accounts. He was followed by Captain Ben Allen, president of the Ottawa Legion Branch, who extended a welcome to all the distinguished guests and led the audience in three wartime songs: *It's a Long Way to Tipperary*, *Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag*, and *There's a Long, Long Trail A-Winding*.⁵⁹ As the crowd sang or hummed half forgotten, maudlin songs, this act of personal and public commemoration drew on the nostalgic past to help frame the coming film.

Lest We Forget covered the whole war, placing Canadian events within the larger international context. Unique naval images of the sinking of the German battleship *Blucher* led to the land war, and years of trench warfare. The striking shots that Bovill had captured on the Somme were a highpoint of the film, but so too were the powerful images from the Hundred Days.

But many viewers must have been disappointed with the weak footage of Vimy, a symbol of Canada's success and sacrifice during the war. Graphics helped to convey the nature of battles that had not been captured on film. "There was another feeling mingled with the sense of drama, for here were real men being maimed and killed, real bodies lay amidst the mud and ruins," recounted one of the lucky newspaper men allowed into the theatre.⁶⁰ Equally interesting was the reaction of the crowd that broke into applause when well-known



personalities, both military and political, appeared on the screen, like Sir Robert Borden, Sir Arthur Currie, Sir Sam Hughes, Lord Kitchener, or Woodrow Wilson. Here were leaders, almost all dead now, who still inspired a sense of patriotism. The antiwar spirit of the late 1920s was not present on this night of ceremony and pomp.

The film ended with the ominous phrase from the narrator: "Was it a war to end war, did it attain its desired end – or did it not?" With the rise of Adolf Hitler in Germany, Benito Mussolini in Italy, and Japanese aggression in the Far East, more than

a few film-goers must have been troubled as they left the theatre. Had the war accomplished anything? For the British Empire, the question could only be, yes. Germany had been stopped, aggression punished, the Kaiser's quest for greater power blocked. But the real question was if the war was worth the cost, and could a film address those complex issues?

This night of relived memories became the focus for an intense debate in the media, in Parliament, and among veterans. *Lest We Forget* was discussed, critiqued, and celebrated over the coming months as it was shown across the country. There was no meta narrative, no uniform discourse: some newspapers and letter-writers saw it as the glorification of war while others found it coloured distastefully by an antiwar fervour; some argued that all citizens of the country should see the film, others thought it too horrific for children, and much too dangerous for the vast unemployed men who might either join



Still images of soldiers leaving a trench captured from the film *Lest We Forget*.

the army or turn to anti-establishment organizations. It was clear, however, that footage shot by the CWRO's cameramen had been made initially for publicity and historical record purposes, but now the viewers were ascribing to it their own values, fears, and worries.

"Patrons of the Canadian dead soldiers have a special opportunity, in comfortable seats, to see the glamour of the human slaughter-house," was the scathing review by the *Ottawa Citizen*.⁶¹ The dead deserved better: they should, it would appear, be commemorated in

sombre and reverential tones. Another reviewer suggested that the film was an "effort to portray the tragic futility of war and to bring home through the visible sense the stupidity and folly of armed conflict." That had not been the goal of the film-makers, but the same reviewer also noted that as the "real pictures, taken in many cases in the height of battle, were thrown on the screen, veterans of various ranks actually saw themselves once more 'going over the top' or advancing over 'No Man's Land' to their objective." This was a chance to see the "privates and non-coms" who had "won the war." Thus, not only did the *Ottawa Journal* categorize *Lest We Forget* as an "anti-war" film, but also one where the forgotten "poor bloody infantry" finally had a chance to be recognised for their bravery and devotion to duty.⁶²

Yet some Canadians responded angrily to these negative reviews. A.U.G. Berry, a Member of Parliament, felt the reviews were an insult to

the dead, “whose deeds and death it com-memorates.”⁶³ Stung by the attack, the Ottawa *Citizen's* editorial board responded that it was not the film to which they had objected, but the pageantry surrounding the event, especially since “millions were on the dole” and suffering despite the many “sacrifices [of] Canadian soldiers.” Using the film and its docu-mentation of sacrifice as a spring-board, critics attacked the Bennett government for failing to live up to the legacy of the Great War soldiers. The grim circumstance of Canadian society in 1935, where both war and capitalism were being questioned, was influencing some reviewers, and presumably audiences.

The debate engendered by the film moved from the media to the House of Commons and into the Senate chambers. After seeing the movie, the pacifist and leader of the Progressives, J.S. Woodsworth, questioned the yearly allotment of money to the Department of National Defence, and thought the funds could be used, as *Lest We Forget* had reminded all viewers, he suggested, to find new steps for “world peace.”⁶⁴ Senator Jas Murdock evoked the film to address similar questions, and although he believed it provided one of the “finest historical records” of the war, he worried that the scenes of brutality and patriotism might promote dangerous passions in its viewers. Every Canadian over the age of thirty should see the film, he thought, but it would be a “crime against humanity” to show it to “impressionable youth” who might be driven



Images of soldiers working in a trench captured from the film *Lest We Forget*.

to martial solutions during these difficult Depression years. Former Prime Minister Arthur Meighen took on both Murdock and Woodsworth, thundering in one speech that being a pacifist is fine, “but we do not find him in the danger zones where the world’s troubles are being brewed, where treaties are being torn in the tatters and thrown to the winds of heaven.” *Lest We Forget* was based on official footage shot during the war and would help, he opined, steel the youth of today for future conflict. Despite not having seen the film, Meighen believed it was “propaganda for peace.” But if “war has to come,”

Canadians “are prepared to do their duty.”⁶⁵ *Lest We Forget* was inciting passions to fight for peace, prepare for war, and perhaps galvanize the unemployed masses against the failed capitalist system.

That same year, the *Canadian Military Gazette* drew its readers to the “very bitter controversy” over the film, but also felt that *Lest We Forget* neither promoted nor was against war, but simply “a complete historical narrative of the war, compiled from the archives.” The footage “cannot but excite admiration for the devotion of the cameramen who took many of the pictures in the thick of bitter engagements, periling their lives with the same abandon as did the actual fighting.” The memory of war would resist the ravages of time, especially since film “taken on the spot cannot lie.”⁶⁶ Despite the naiveté of assuming the impartiality of film, the *Gazette* hoped it would not be employed to support

polemic causes, but rather would simply stand as a record of the war.

As *Lest We Forget* was shown across the country, advertisements were equally ambivalent about the film's message. In Toronto, the billboards shouted: "THE TRUTH AT LAST from the OFFICIAL war films." "Truth" and "official" could not help but be observed.⁶⁷ With advertisements claiming, "War as it really was!", it seemed as if the war experience had been captured and displayed for all Canadians.⁶⁸ Yet as a record of combat, it could only present part of that experience. It might not lie, but it certainly did not tell the whole truth. Film imposed structure on a chaotic situation: it brought order to the inherently disordered. Generals seemed to have control over their plans; soldiers were smiling and anxious for battle. Although there were powerful and disturbing images of advancing soldiers, tanks, and corpses, film could not convey the smell of rotting flesh, the constant fatigue that plagued all men, the discomfort of living in open ditches, the cacophony of brutal sounds, or the waves of fear emanating from young boys about to go "over the top." After viewing the films, many must have felt that they now understood the experience of war; unfortunately, it was, for the most part, much worse than they could ever have imagined.⁶⁹

In one of the most virulent denunciations of the film, Margaret Curry, a former wartime nurse, questioned how any could call this film an actual representation of the war:

Did it bring to their nostrils the stench of gangrene, the sight of the poor head wounds plucking out their brains with their fingers; the pitiful wrecks of shell-shocks, the death of the tetanus patients?... If this wonderful film really showed the 'stark realities of war' it should show the death of gassed patients....They were terrible deaths to behold. Did any...ever see...death by gas...his protruding eyes and the blood streaming from them, his lolling tongue, his bleeding ears, his terrible rasping gasps, his clutching hands to his throat - ah, they will want the curtain drawn.⁷⁰



Still image of dead soldiers captured from the film *Lest We Forget*.

Another commentator, future diplomat Escott Reid, writing in *Saturday Night*, queried the very nature of the film: "What is it that they wanted to persuade us not to forget?" The film rightly highlighted the bravery of the soldiers, Reid noted, but it "did little to make us remember the stupidity of the generals who planned the Passchendaele offensive and other equally murderous mistakes or what the troops felt about the stupidity of the generals." As Reid remarked acridly: "a film sponsored by the Department of National Defence of Canada naturally prefers as its unavowed title 'Let us Forget the Stupidity of Generals.'"⁷¹

Despite the bitter controversy, *Lest We Forget* played for over a year in Canadian theatres, grossing more than \$34,000.⁷² It was not a blockbuster, but since it had been produced for almost nothing, these were significant profits. The film also had a successful international run, and Beaverbrook's footage again helped to represent Canadians throughout the British Empire.⁷³

But the true legacy of the film remains its contested interpretation. *Lest We Forget* propelled constituents to reach far beyond a simple narrative and to question the meaning of the war. These reactions cannot be separated from the year of its showing in 1935, with domestic anguish over the Depression and the internationally inspired fear of another world-wide conflict between forces of Fascism, Communism, and Democracy. Clearly, too, the impact of the film was partially due to its official, seemingly authentic nature. But Beaverbrook had aimed to both document the war and publicize the Canadian war effort. His film footage was shot for a purpose; yet two decades later a far different film was presented. While there are no answers to the multiple meanings interwoven or underpinning *Lest We Forget*, and how it was interpreted by Canadians across the country, one is tempted to agree with a contemporary reviewer who declared that it was "the most important film of the decade."⁷⁴

* * * * *

Lest We Forget is tame to modern eyes, especially in the aftermath of the hyper-realism of Stephen Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) or other modern war films. But *Lest We Forget* has much to tell us of the Great War. The war's memory had become contested ground by 1935, especially when viewed after the waves of antiwar literature of the 1920s. And while these protest works were not accepted by all, and were, for the most part, an aspect of elite discourse, the fame and international support of the film, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, reached many more Canadians. The war could not be portrayed in the same terms as Beaverbrook might have hoped in its immediate aftermath, but nor could it be an antiwar film since the memory of the war was not one of utter hopelessness and suicidal attacks. The fighting had been terrible, but it had been, in the minds of most Canadians, fought for a just cause: to stop German aggression and to support the British Empire, and the important values for which it stood. These were messages woven into the film and juxtaposed against the terrible cost of the war. In the mid-1930s, though, it was inevitable that the film would question whether the terrible bloodletting had been worth the cost, especially with the rise of dictators around the world. Some used the film as a warning to the future: both to rearm or prepare for peace. Neither message was part of the film's narrative, but resonated with many viewers.

The film-makers had aimed to offer an authentic glimpse into Canada's part in the war. Yet just as no history can fully capture the past, neither can a poem, a play, or a film. While participants could use their memories to craft postwar works, without Lord Beaverbrook's foresight, there would have been almost no moving picture legacy of Canada's part in the war. To both understand *Lest We Forget*, and the history behind this important record, it is worth remembering that war footage consists of not only what the soldiers did, but what the cameramen could shoot.

This existing wartime footage, which is used and reused in every History Television documentary or National Film Board production, is all we shall ever have in representing the moving picture legacy of Canadians in the Great War.⁷⁵ Beaverbrook's desire to publicize and document Canada's Great War sacrifice ensured

that aspects of that experience were captured on film. But it was selective, and the result must be necessarily that the war will be reinterpreted by each succeeding generation. However, with the CWRO film footage, we have a better opportunity to do just that, and build upon Beaverbrook's bedrock of history.

Notes

1. Ottawa *Evening Journal*, 2 March 1935.
2. Ottawa *Citizen*, 7 March 1935.
3. London *Evening Free Press*, 4 April 1935.
4. For the best articles, see Tim Travers, "Canadian Film and the First World War," Michael Paris (ed.), *The First World War and Popular Cinema* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2000); Germain Lacasse, "Les films 'perdus' de la guerre oubliée," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 7.1 (Spring/printemps 1998).
5. Nicholas Reeves, "Through the Eye of the Camera: Contemporary Cinema Audiences and their 'Experience' of War in the Film, *Battle of the Somme*," Peter Liddle and Hugh Cecil (eds.), *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experience* (Leo Cooper, 1996), p.781.
6. Library Archives Canada [LAC], Records of the Department of Militia and Defence [RG 9], v. 4746, folder 175, file 5 [175/5], The Canadian War Records Office, [draft history, 21 February 1918].
7. Daniel Dancocks, *Welcome To Flanders Fields* (McClelland and Stewart, 1988), p.46.
8. LAC, Records of the Department of National Defence (hereafter RG 24), v. 1747, DHS 5-10, Report on Activities of Canadian Official Moving Pictures Operators and Record of Canadian Official Films taken during the War, 30 December 1921, written by William Douglas, formerly of CWRO [Douglas Report].
9. LAC, MG 27, II-D-9, A.E. Kemp Papers [KP], v. 133, file C-27, Dwyer to Hodgins, 27 January 1917.
10. KP v. 133, file C-27, Second Report of the War Office Cinematograph Committee, September 1918; Nicholas Reeves, *Official British Film Propaganda during the First World War* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), especially chapter 2.
11. LAC, Records of the Department of External Affairs [RG 25], v. 259, file P-3-19, Order-in-Council 3117, 6 January 1915.
12. See Desmond Morton, *A Peculiar Kind of Politics: Canada's Overseas Ministry in the First World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).
13. RG 9, v. 4746, 175/1, CWRO, Report Submitted to...Sir Robert Borden, 11 January 1917.
14. For Aitken's actions in publicizing the Canadians during the war, see Tim Cook, "Documenting War & Forging Reputations: Sir Max Aitken and the Canadian War Records Office in the First World War," *War In History* 10 (3), 2003.
15. Anonymous [likely Sir Max Aitken], "Canadian War Records: The Making of History," *Canada In Khaki*:

- A Tribute to the Officers and Men now serving in the Canadian Expeditionary Force, No. 1* (London: CWRO, 1917), p.115.
16. For the role of the CWRO, see Robert McIntosh, "The Great War, Archives and Modern Memory," *Archivaria* 46 (Fall 1998).
 17. Official historian A.F. Duguid wrote in 1938, after having used the CWRO-shaped records to craft his history, that the Canadian War Diaries were at least twice as detailed as that of the British and Australians; "this excellence... must in fairness be laid to Beaverbrook and his emissaries at the front 'urging upon units in the field the historical importance of making their own war diaries complete.'" LAC, Records of the Department of National Defence (RG 24), v. 1755, DHS 10-10 pt. 2, Duguid to Sir Andrew Macphail, 8 February 1938.
 18. RG 9, v. 4746, 175/1, Canadian War Records Office, Report submitted to...Sir Robert L. Borden, 11 January 1917.
 19. RG 9, v. 4746, 175/3, Minutes of Meeting, 25 September 1916. The Dwyer films were sought after by the Department of National Defence for the next two decades, and it was not until the mid-1930s when they were formally acquired. They were not used in *Lest We Forget*. RG 24, v. 1745, file 5-5 (v. 4), Memo, 15 March 1935.
 20. LAC, MG 27 II G 1, Series E, Lord Beaverbrook papers [BP], A-1765, Report by Sir Max Aitken to Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Borden on the Joint Establishment of the Canadian Representative at the Front and the Canadian War Records, n.d. [ca. 19 May 1916].
 21. RG 24, v. 1747, DHS 5-10, Fiset to Governor General, 17 February 1916.
 22. See Jeffrey A. Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship During Canada's Great War* (University of Alberta Press, 1996), pp.107-8; Dagmar Novak, *Dubious Glory: The Two World Wars and the Canadian Novel* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2000), pp.47-8.
 23. For a revisionist view on what Canadians knew during the war, see Ian Hugh Maclean Miller, *Our Glory and Our Grief: Torontonians and the Great War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002). Compare this with Keshen's *Propaganda and Censorship During Canada's Great War*.
 24. Peter Morris, *Embattled Shadows: A History of Canadian Cinema, 1895-1939* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), pp.58-61; Charles F. Backhouse, *Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau, 1917-1941* (Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute, 1974), pp.4-9.
 25. Maria Tippett, *Art at the Service of War: Canada, Art and the Great War* (University of Toronto Press, 1984), p.21.
 26. BP A-1768, Crusade by cinema. By a movie man, n.d. (late 1917).
 27. RG 9, v. 4746, 175/2, memo, Lieutenant J.W. Smith [ca. 1917]; KP v. 133, file C-27, Memo re Hon. Captain J.W. Smith, [ca. 1919]; BP A-1766, Cinematograph, [draft by Beaverbrook, n.d., ca. July 1919].
 28. BP A-1767, Bovill to Aitken, 15 January 1917; Holt-White to Beaverbrook, 9 March 1917; CWRO to Manley-Sims, 10 April 1917.
 29. RG 9, v. 72, file 10-8-11, Beaverbrook to Perley, 5 June 1917.
 30. Even after the CWRO sent out an appeal to the Canadian Corps for experienced cameramen, they received no applicants. Tim Travers, "Canadian Film and the First World War," Michael Paris (ed.), *The First World War and Popular Cinema* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2000), p.99.
 31. Canadian War Museum, 58A 1 67.8, Gurney Little, "Siege Battery Experiences in World War I," [unpublished memoirs], pp.159-61.
 32. Sandra Gwyn, *Tapestry of War* (HarperCollins, 1992), p.338.
 33. BP A-1768, Faunthorpe to Beaverbrook, 9 July 1917 and 20 August 1917.
 34. L. McLeod Gould, *From B.C. To Baisieux: Being the Narrative of the 102nd Canadian Infantry Battalion* (Victoria, 1919), p.56.
 35. RG 24, v. 1747, DHS 5-10, Douglas Report. See the self-serving autobiography by Malins for a first-hand account of filming the war: Lt. Geoffrey H. Malins, *How I Filmed The War* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1920). Some of Malins footage was used in *Our Heroic Canadian Brothers and Canadian Sector of the Western Front in July 1918*, both held at the Imperial War Museum, and *Glory of Canada*, held by the NFB, and containing obviously staged shots.
 36. BP A-1766, Cinematograph, draft by Beaverbrook, n.d. [July 1919].
 37. KP v. 133, file C-27, Note: Re Official Films (n.d., ca. 1919). This film is also known as *Canadians at Vimy Ridge*.
 38. BP A-1766, Selection of Films, draft notice, 3 October 1918.
 39. See KP v. 133, file C-27 Second Report of the War Office Cinematograph Committee, August 1919; and CWRO, Third Annual Report submitted by the Office in Charge to the Honour Sir Edward Kemp, 31 August 1919.
 40. KP v. 133, file C-27, Journal: Canada, 30 August 1919, p.243.
 41. BP A-1766, Cinematograph, Draft by Beaverbrook, [July 1919]. On the failed museum and official history program, see Laura Brandon, "The Canadian War Memorial That Never War," *Canadian Military History* 7.4 (Autumn 1998) and Wes Gustavson, "Fairly Well Known and Need Not be Discussed: Colonel A.F. Duguid and the Canadian Official History of the First World War," *Canadian Military History* 10.2 (Spring 2001).
 42. LAC, MG 30 E100, Sir Arthur Currie papers, v. 8, file 22, Duguid to Bovey, 18 March 1924; RG 24, v. 1747, DHS 5-10, Duguid to MacBrien, 3 January 1922.
 43. RG 24, v. 1733, DHS 1-12 (pt.3), Report from the Director, Historical Section, January-March 1926; LAC, Records of the National Archives of Canada (RG 37), v. 41, file 60-3 NAT Def (v.4), Desbarats to Doughty, 18 January 1926.
 44. See Brian Bond, *The Unquiet Western Front: Britain's Role in Literature and History* (Cambridge University Press, 2002); Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997).
 45. Tonnie and Valmai Holt, *In Search of the Better 'Ole: The Life the Works and the Collectables of Bruce Bairnsfather* (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1985) chapter 10.
 46. RG 24, v. 1745, file 5-5 (v.3), Duguid to McNaughton, 12 September 1929; Desbarats to Doughty, 8 April 1929.
 47. "Object of 10-Year Battle Between London and Ottawa Lost War Film Turns Up Here," *The Toronto Mail and Empire*, 16 January 1933.

48. "The Lost War Films," *Ottawa Citizen*, 26 January 1933.
49. John Whiteclay Chambers II, "All Quiet on the Western Front (U.S., 1930): The Antiwar Film and Image of Modern War," John Whiteclay Chambers II and David Culbert (eds.), *World War II, Film, and History* (Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.13-30.
50. *Lest We Forget*. Department of National Defence, 1935. A copy of the film can be viewed or purchased from the Library and Archives of Canada.
51. LAC, MG 30 E133, A.G.L. McNaughton papers (hereafter MP), v. 7, file: War Films, Memorandum, 20 March 1933; RG 24, v. 1745, file 5-5 (v. 3), Report of First Meeting, 21 April 1933.
52. RG 24, v. 1745, file 5-5 (v. 3), 2nd Meeting of Canadian Official Motion Picture committee, 4 May 1933.
53. MP v. 7, file War Films, draft letter to the Prime Minister, 12 April 1934; LAC, MG 26K, R.B. Bennett papers (hereafter RBB papers), 287000-287001, Donald Sutherland to Bennett, 9 April 1934.
54. RBB, 287009, McNaughton to Bennett, 3 October 1934.
55. MP v. 7, file War Films, Memo, 1 November 1934; RBB, 287018, Sutherland to Bennett, 5 November 1934.
56. MP, v. 7, file War Films, Meetings of Committee, 5 November 1934.
57. *Ibid.*, Memorandum, 11 February 1935; Memorandum by Doughty, 12 December 1934.
58. *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 2 March 1935.
59. "First Showing of Picture of Canada At War," *Ottawa Citizen*, 8 March 1935.
60. *Ibid.*
61. "Dress Up to See the Slaughter," *Ottawa Citizen*, 7 March 1935.
62. "Stark Realism of War is Depicted," *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 8 March 1935.
63. "Letter," *Ottawa Citizen*, 9 March 1935.
64. *Hansard, House of Commons Debates*, 8 March 1935.
65. *The Debates of the Senate*, 19 March 1935.
66. *The Canadian Military Gazette*, 26 March 1935.
67. Advertisement in *Toronto Telegram*, 5 April 1935.
68. Film advertisement, *Regina Daily Star*, 4 April 1935.
69. See Nicholas Reeves, *Official British Film Propaganda During The First World War* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), pp.89-92.
70. "De Profundis," *The Ottawa Morning Citizen*, 21 March 1935.
71. Escott Reid, "'Lest We Forget' What?," *Saturday Night*, 4 May 1935.
72. RG 24, v. 1745, file 5-5 (v.4), Statement of receipts, April 1935 to July 1936.
73. David Clandfield, *Canadian Film* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987), p.9.
74. "Lest We Forget An Epic Story," *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 9 March 1935.
75. The CWRO footage was transferred to the National Film Board in 1951. The nitrate originals were destroyed in a fire on 17 July 1967. Before that, however, the films had been transferred to 35 mm or 16 mm copies, and these survived the fire. Copies were also held at the then Public Archives of Canada. Most of the available Canadian footage is at one of these two institutions, although there remains some additional film at the Imperial War Museum.

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