



On a sandy plain at Valcartier, Quebec, a military training camp with tents, roads, horses, and the biggest rifle range in the world was hastily set up for 30 000 volunteers.

Valcartier, Quebec. Over 30 000 men went through the paces of training at Valcartier, but they were often poorly equipped. Hughes insisted that the troops be issued the **Ross rifle**. It was a good sharpshooting gun manufactured in Canada, but it proved to be useless in trench warfare. In the mud and dirt of the trenches, it frequently jammed. In sheer frustration, defenceless Canadian soldiers took Enfield rifles from dead British soldiers on the battlefield. But Hughes would hear no criticism of the Ross rifle. Eventually, after an official investigation, Canadian troops were issued new guns in 1916. Sam Hughes was later fired by Prime Minister Robert Borden.

Nevertheless, Hughes had mustered an impressive number of Canadian troops. By October, the first Canadian contingent was on its way across the Atlantic. In Britain, they were given more formal training on the muddy plains of Salisbury. The troops were placed under the command of British officers, most of whom were

from Britain's upper class. The officers demanded unquestioning respect. Canadian troops clashed with formal British traditions and the strict military discipline. Many also did not recognize the class distinction of officers taken for granted in Britain. Hughes also resisted British attempts to divide the Canadians and distribute them among other divisions of British soldiers. He insisted they remain as a united Canadian fighting force. By February, the Canadian troops were on their way to the front lines in France.

Other troops waited at home for their turn to join the forces overseas. Their main worry was that the war would be over before they got there. The soldiers had little idea of what lay ahead and little understanding of modern warfare. Images of short, sharp, glorious victories clouded their vision. Some marched off with a bounce in their step and a jaunty tune on their lips. They were off on a journey from which one in ten would never return.



IMPACT ON SOCIETY

PATRIOTISM AND PREJUDICE

Canada's population in 1914 was still primarily British. The majority of volunteers who enlisted in Canada's armed forces first were of British heritage. But by the end of the war, Canadians from many different backgrounds had participated and distinguished themselves. Some, however, faced racism and resistance in their efforts. People of Asian, African, and Aboriginal heritage faced hostility and discrimination, even when they were offering to fight for Canada. In fact, attitudes of intolerance toward all "non-British" people were heightened during the war. This was the negative side of the patriotic fervour with which people greeted the war.

Aboriginal nations consider themselves as separate nations independent of Canada. Most Aboriginal nations, however, did not discourage their members from joining the war effort if they wished. Over 4000 members of Aboriginal nations joined Canada's fighting forces in World War I. This was a significant number considering the total population of Aboriginal peoples at the time was around 100 000.

Among the Métis who served was Patrick Riel, a grandson of Louis Riel. Patrick Riel was killed at

Vimy Ridge. Francis Pegahmagabow, an Ojibway from Parry Island in Ontario, won a military medal and several bars for his skill and courage as a scout and expert shot. He was the most decorated Aboriginal soldier in World War I. "Ducky" Norwest, a Cree, also won recognition as an excellent sniper. Many members of the Six Nations also volunteered to fight for the British Empire. Since they saw themselves as independent nations, they requested that a call for their services come from the King, and not the Canadian government.

Black Canadians who wanted to fight overseas met with resistance and racism. Military leaders did not want to accept Black recruits. However, the ghastly death toll on the front lines and the persistence of Black leaders forced the military to rethink its position. Some Black Canadians managed to break through the barriers and joined front line fighting units. Sixteen joined the 106th Battalion of Nova Scotia Rifles. One, Jerry Jones, served in



Aboriginal members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force with their elders. Over 4000 Aboriginal people saw active service in World War I.



In 1916, the Department of Militia and Defence authorized the formation of the No. 2 Construction Battalion in Pictou, Nova Scotia. It was the first Black Canadian unit. Members of this unit contributed to the war effort by specializing in logging, milling, and shipping.



The Japanese population in Canada was small in 1914. Nevertheless, Japanese Canadians enlisted in the Canadian forces. Their contribution was forgotten during World War II, however, when many Japanese were interned and their property was confiscated.

France. He wiped out a machine gun post at Vimy Ridge and was wounded at Passchendaele. His hometown newspaper in Truro, Nova Scotia, described him in 1917 as a brave and resourceful patriot. His commander recommended him for a Distinguished Conduct Medal, but many top military officials and politicians still opposed Black enlistment in the army. They would not award a Black man a military medal.

Ukrainians, Germans, Austrians, and others from "enemy" countries were considered "enemy aliens" in Canada. It was feared they would still harbour sympathies for their home countries. Though they had been welcomed into Canada not many years before, many were deported (sent back) to their home countries or arrested and placed in internment camps during the war. Some, however,



Women also faced barriers in 1914. Women could not join the armed forces. Over 2000 Canadian women volunteered to work overseas as nurses and ambulance drivers, however. Many were stationed in field hospitals just behind the front lines.

such as the Ukrainians, had come to Canada to get away from the oppression of the German and Austrian empires. They wanted to fight against militarism and oppression by enlisting in the army. An estimated 10 000 Ukrainians served with the Canadian forces in World War I, though some were arrested for their efforts. One Ukrainian recruit, Philip Konowal, won a Victoria Cross for destroying a machine-gun nest in France in 1917.

Many other groups including people of Italian, Jewish, Chinese, and Japanese heritage also fought or worked in labour battalions for Canada during World War I. These were people Canada did not welcome into the country before the war. Some had lived in Canada for generations, but they were treated with increasing prejudice and hostility during the war. Though many showed their loyalty to the country and supported the war effort, their contributions were not recognized.

1. Find out more about the contributions of the individuals and communities mentioned in this feature.
2. What other communities made significant contributions to the war effort, but are not always remembered?
3. Discuss why the war heightened attitudes of racism and intolerance.



Historical Inquiry

Developing Skills: Recognizing and Understanding Bias

What is bias? During World War I, many military officers and politicians were against Black Canadians enlisting in the armed forces. It was believed they would be "inferior" soldiers. This belief is an example of bias.

Bias is an inaccurate and limited view of an event, situation, individual, or group. Bias against a particular cultural, racial, religious, or linguistic (language) group can be expressed through speech, behaviour, and in written, audio, or visual materials. During World War I, the officers and politicians showed a racial bias against Black Canadians. They expressed this bias through discrimination by rejecting Black-Canadian recruits. Today, while there are still examples of such bias, it is not as widespread. There are many Black Canadians in the armed forces. Biased viewpoints can be changed.

A person's bias is shaped by his or her frame of reference. Personal background, family, education, culture, experiences, knowledge, concerns, and interests all go into making up a person's frame of reference. Around the time of World War I, the frame of reference of many White people around the world created the belief that Black people were "inferior." Today we know this view is wrong and should be rejected.

It is important to recognize bias because it is based on distorted facts and incomplete information. There is nothing wrong with different viewpoints. They invite discussion and critical thinking. But all viewpoints need to be analyzed carefully for bias. Recognizing bias also helps us to change our ideas or beliefs if they are not based on accurate and complete information.

Materials you read, hear, or see can express a bias. These materials can include books, newspaper or magazine articles, films, TV shows, posters, paintings, speeches, and web pages. Use the following questions as a guide to help you recognize and understand bias.

Key Criteria

1. a) What is the source and who is the author? What was the author's intention?

- b) Who is the intended audience?
- c) How might these facts influence the point of view expressed?

2. When was the material written or created? How might the time period and circumstances colour the view of events?

3. Are emotionally charged words or phrases used? Find examples. Which present a positive point of view? Which present a negative view?

4. What is fact and what is opinion? Are opinions supported by facts? Remember that facts are information or statements that can be proven. Opinions are thoughts or feelings that may or may not be supported by facts.

5. Does the author oversimplify? Are important facts left out?

6. Are both sides of the issue considered or is only one side presented and not the other?

7. a) Check other sources. Do they agree? If sources disagree, consider why.
- b) Which sources do you trust? Why?

8. a) What is the bias? Try to state it in one sentence.

- b) How might frame of reference account for the bias?

9. How might a more balanced view be presented?

Focus In!

Frequently, French and English Canadians have looked at issues from different points of view. Many people in Québec have always felt like outsiders in Canada. They became part of the British Empire because of military defeat. Their frame of reference has been formed by their background, French-Canadian culture, and their experiences in