

Operation BERLIN September 25/26 1944 - The Evacuation after Operation MARKET GARDEN

Four Grade VI and VIII elementary students in Arnprior, ON recently undertook an ambitious project to examine how the Canadian WW II participation is so often under-represented in the popular movies. Included in their examination was the movie "A Bridge Too Far" that dealt with Operation MARKET GARDEN – the Allied airborne operation at Arnhem. During their research they learned of the heroic stormboat rescue operation conducted by a joint Royal Engineer/Royal Canadian Engineer force that was successful in bringing out some 2,500 of the 2,800 airborne troops that were saved from the bridgehead.

The CMEA and the CME Museum combined to assist the class in their research and we were very pleased to learn of their success. Their report follows:

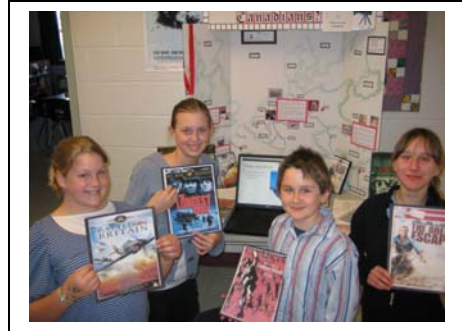
Where are the Canadians?

By: Sydney Toole, Josh Jones, Hannah Jones and Vicki Brittle

Annually, the Ottawa Historica Society holds a history project competition for elementary school students. Similar to a science fair, a Historica Fair encourages students to look deeper into Canadian history. This years Ottawa competition was held at the Canadian War Museum on April 9th in conjunction with the celebrations surrounding Vimy Ridge Day.

This years Ottawa Historic Fair's most celebrated project, completed by four students from the Ottawa Valley community of Arnprior, was recognized for its originality, research quality, and magnitude. The project was called "Where are the Canadians?" As the title suggests it asked that very question of four well known Hollywood films: "The Longest Day", "The Battle of Britain", "The Great Escape", and "A Bridge Too Far".

The students realized that the history they were learning in school wasn't reflected in the films. In many situations they noted that facts were changed, names were altered, but, more frequently, the Canadians were ignored altogether. The most celebrated aspect of the project, and the part the drew the most excitement from the judges and spectators, was their investigation into the 23rd Field Company, Royal Canadian Engineers and their work during Operation BERLIN – the evacuation of Arnhem.



Their ability to utilize many first hand sources and the opportunity to speak with then-Lieutenant Russell Kennedy M.C., a veteran of the campaign, seek the aid of Ken Holmes and the Canadian Military Engineers Museum, and even residents of Holland were determining factors in the project receiving such high praise. It was awarded national recognition and the right to represent Ottawa at the provincial championships, June 11th to 15th. They also received the prestigious Canadian National [CN] Military Award given to the best project dealing with Canadian military history. As Josh Jones, a member of the group stated, "not too bad for 11-year olds!"



Congratulations to the students for their interest, their research and their winning performance.

Interest in this heroic WW II sapper exploit is often renewed at this time of year as memorial ceremonies are conducted at the monument near the rescue site in The Netherlands at Driel. This year Russ Kennedy has published a limited-edition book of his personal memories and a Toronto-area researcher is awaiting publication of his work on Operation BERLIN.