

November



Happy 150th Canada! 1867-2017



Jewish Canadian Involvement



by Rochelle Burns, PhD ©

The history of Jews in the Canadian military is another proud moment in Jewish Canadian involvement. During World War 1, 38% of Jewish males over 21 served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force compared to 3.4% Canadian soldiers of all origins.

It's harder to figure out the statistics for World War 11. It's roughly estimated one third of Jewish eligible men served. It assuredly is more since many Jews in the military didn't declare their religion in case they were captured by the Nazis.

Fast forward to a few years ago when I was a Citizenship Judge: During one ceremony I conducted, I met a World War 11 vet helping to welcome new citizens. I told him about my uncle, killed during WW11. Amazingly, he was in the group following my uncle. He was in the burial detail, so he would have carried my uncle's body to be buried. He filled in many parts of this 23 year old's last day.

Recently, my husband and I were escorted, by a French expert on the Normandy Invasion, to areas Canadians helped liberate. My husband, John, brought small stones from Ontario for us to place on my uncle's grave. I took a few stones from the exact area on the beach my uncle had to cross. I gave those stones to my cousin in Montreal who bears our uncle's name. The circle is complete.

To all Jewish Canadian soldiers who gave their lives for freedom, we salute you with these words from Laurence Binyon's (1869-1943) poem *For the Fallen*:

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them.

Dr. Burns is a social historian and member of Temple Emanu-El



David Goldsmith, Beny-Sur-Mer, France:
stones on top from Canada; this writer's uncle
was killed taking Caen, a month after D-Day