

## Local duo plan Battleground tour for area students

By Neil Ormford

Over the past decade, Remembrance activities have been growing in significance and popularity for Canadians ? have you noticed? Events on November 11th and surrounding some of the important Anniversaries have been more frequent and well-attended. Followers of ?Ancestry.ca? are in the thousands online, suggesting that Canadians are caring more about the Battlefield stories associated with some of our proudest moments in history. So many Canadians have become ?active historians' engaged in learning about their family story and motivated to ?see where it all happened'; to ?walk in the footsteps' of their ancestors ... particularly if the ancestor served in Canada's Forces.

CanHist Tours' historian Chris Evans and history specialist Neil Orford have designed a unique Battlefield Tour experience to lead Canadians through some of the most important Battlefields of Canada's WW1 and WW2 experience. Traveling through Belgium and France, CanHist Tours want Canadians to connect with their History through a compelling series of stories told over an exciting 14-day excursion in Europe, hosted by the travel experts at Ellison Travel & Tours.

Do you have a personal story of a parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle who served for Canada in World War One or Two? Has it been your goal to visit the grave of a long-ago Canadian relation who died in battle amid the tragedy of conflict in one of those Wars? After watching the ceremonies in France honouring the 100th Anniversary of the Battle at Vimy Ridge, is standing on that Ridge atop that incredible monument now on your personal ?bucket list?'

CanHist Tours has heard from hundreds of Canadians who want to participate in Canada's story, by touring the battlefields and learning about the history of France and Belgium and the Canadian soldiers who served there. At Vimy Ridge, Hill 70, Ypres and Passchendaele, the First World War stories are a riveting narrative of a nation maturing amid the horrors of battle. And from Dieppe to Juno Beach, the accounts of Canadian heroism liberating France from tyranny are told and retold in letters, diaries and the stunning images of World War Two.

In 2017, we are living in challenging times that encourage Canadians to explore their history like never before. At CanHist Tours the goal is to connect travelers with a personal engagement in battlefield experiences in Europe over the last 100 years. The commitment is to tell the stories of battlefields to help you find your place in our remarkable Canadian narrative.

Area residents will be able to experience our shared history in Europe at key destinations in Flanders, Normandy and Paris, with optional excursions to destinations where you can experience the rich culture and traditions of France and Belgium.

During the planned tours next July, Messrs. Evans and Orford, acting as guides, will explore the stories of Canadian veterans and visit the sites of Canada's rich battlefield history.