Acts of Remembrance: Canadian Great War Memory and the Public Funerals of Sir Arthur Currie and Canon F.G. Scott

*Cérémonies du Souvenir : les funérailles publiques de Sir Arthur Currie et du
chanoine F.G. Scott et la mémoire canadienne de la Grande Guerre*

Melissa Davidson

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ACTS OF REMEMBRANCE: CANADIAN GREAT WAR MEMORY AND THE PUBLIC FUNERALS OF SIR ARTHUR CURRIE AND CANON F.G. SCOTT

Melissa DAVIDSON
University of Ottawa

Canadian public memory of the Great War was initially fragmented, centered around specific locations and events, before becoming more nationalistic in the 1930s. After the outbreak of the Second World War the public memory became more distant still from the experience of 1914-1918 although specific commemorations of the war remained most meaningful to those who had been directly affected. This paper looks briefly at Armistice/Remembrance Day rituals and uses the public funerals of two Great War heroes, General Sir Arthur Currie (1933) and Canon F.G. Scott (1944), to illustrate the changes in Canadian public memory after 1918.

Jusqu'aux années 1930, on peut remarquer que la mémoire canadienne de la Grande Guerre était fragmentée et basée sur des lieux et événements particuliers. Par la suite, elle devient plus nationaliste. Avec la Seconde Guerre mondiale, la mémoire collective semble s'éloigner à nouveau du souvenir de 1914-1918. Pourtant sa commémoration reste importante pour ceux qui ont été directement touchés par cette Grande guerre. Cet article analyse les rites commémoratifs du jour du Souvenir au Canada et s'appuie sur une observation des obsèques publiques de deux héros canadiens, le Général Sir Arthur Currie (1933) et Canon F.G. Scott (1944), pour illustrer les changements qui s'opèrent dans la mémoire collective après 1918.

Introduction

On 11 November 1918, soldiers overseas marvelled at the sudden silence as, after more than four years of war, the firing ceased and peace arrived. More than 600,000 Canadians had served in uniform during the war, while their families and communities at home made their own contributions to the war effort. They knit socks, raised funds for relief, organized patriotic meetings, and wrote letters to their absent friends and loved ones. Although Canadians could be rightly proud of their own part in the victory, both as citizens of the British Empire and in the flush of a young Canadian nationalism, the war had also left deep scars. Some 60,000 war dead paid the ultimate price, nearly a third of whom have no known graves. The church bells and fire trucks that announced the Armistice to Canada in the early morning hours of November 11, were not only making a joyful noise in celebration of victory, they were also marking a deep and abiding grief for all that had been lost.

In the aftermath of the Armistice, Canadians had to come to terms with the changes and losses associated with the war, a bereavement process which

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was both difficult and extended. People's experience of the war had been intensely personal and rooted in local communities, and it was at this level that Canadian commemorations began. Honour rolls created during the war became the basis for memorial tablets erected by churches and employers, and local committees erected monuments in public spaces to serve as a permanent reminder of the service rendered and sacrifices made. The British policy, decided early in the war, of not repatriating bodies, meant that Canadian graves were maintained by the Imperial War Graves Commission (later the Commonwealth War Graves Commission) near where the men had died. As a consequence, bereaved relatives had no easy access to the graves. But even knowing the location of a final resting place was a comfort denied the relatives of those whose bodies could not be located or identified (CRANE 2013).

Although both groups were prominent at annual memorial and Armistice Day ceremonies, for the latter group the construction of local memorials where the dead could be named took on an enormous significance in the years immediately following the war. In Britain, the Cenotaph in Whitehall and the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior were dedicated in 1920; these provide physical sites for public mourning at a national level and centres around which commemorative rituals could be established (CONNELLY 2001; GREGORY 1994; WINTER 1986). Canada, however, lacked any such national memorial focus. This physical lack and the fluidity of commemorative forms that emerged in Canada encouraged localism until the early 1930s when a greater national consciousness began to emerge, and with it more nationalist commemorations of Canada's war dead. This would culminate with the dedication of the Vimy Memorial in 1936 and the National War Memorial in 1939. Then, from September 1939, the outbreak of the Second World War layered a new generation of sacrifices over those of 1914-1918.

This paper will briefly trace the evolution of Canadian Armistice/Remembrance Day rituals in order to situate the public funeral in 1933 of General Sir Arthur Currie (the first Canadian-born commander of the Canadian Corps) and that in 1944 of Canon F.G. Scott (Senior Chaplain of the 1st Division and author of *The Great War as I Saw It*). Set against the development of the repeated rituals, the public reactions to and observances of the deaths of these two public figures help to illustrate how the acting out of the public memory of the Great War changed in the decades following 1918. Canadian public memory of the war was initially fragmented, centering around local observances, before becoming more nationalistic in the 1930s. The passage of time and experience of the Second World War distanced people

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from the particular experience of the Great War and caused specific commemorations of the Great War to once again become important primarily to those who had been most directly affected by it.

Background

Adrian Gregory points out three approaches in the study of the memory of the Great War: the war as a point of rupture; the war as part of an ongoing cultural tradition; and a search for the changeable meaning of the war as rooted in particular contexts (GREGORY 1994: 2-5). All three approaches, the third of which is adopted here, acknowledge that both the experience of the war and its memory had to be confronted after the Armistice. Popular and literary memoirs, novels and poetry were one way of doing this. The construction of memorials, both personal and public, and the acting out of ceremonies of remembrance were others. Unlike personal memorials — a fallen soldier's photograph and medals proudly and perpetually displayed in the home, for example — public memorials and services were and remain acts of community. They served to perpetuate the bonds and boundaries created during the war and to shape a broader sense of collective memory by deciding what should and should not be commemorated. The wartime community which was exhorted to direct its efforts to support King and country was primed to believe that, after the arrival of peace, its losses were more than merely individual grief, but belonged in some senses to the broader cause and larger community. The purpose of commemoration was, in this way, two-fold. It was an acknowledgement of individual grief and sacrifices, but it was also acted out in a public way as part of a larger community in recognition of its efforts and achievements. With the passage of time, the context of the commemoration would change, this balance would shift, and new meanings would be added to the old forms.

In contrast to the detailed surveys which have recently been published on British memorialization, Canadian histories have focused largely on physical memorials and have not, therefore, been as sensitive to the changing context of the war's public memory. Jonathan Vance's *Death so Noble* (1997) remains the touchstone work and, while it does take into account literary and cultural expressions of memory and bereavement, it fails to fully take into account the way that the meaning attached to these monuments changed throughout the post-war period. Like Denise Thomson's "National Sorrow, National Pride" (1995/1996), the only article to focus on commemorative rituals, the passage of time and changing circumstances are not fully taken into

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account and the post-war period is taken as an undifferentiated whole. The evolution of commemorative rituals and the effect of events — the distancing of time, the difficulties and changes of the 1930s, and the influence of the Second World War — have not been explored in the Canadian context, a major historiographical gap.

As Vance does point out and Tim Cook discusses at length in *Clio's Warriors* (2006), the lack of an official and comprehensive history of the Canadian action overseas meant that the Canadian war narrative was shaped primarily by other means, notably by local histories, monuments, and memories. The fragmentation of the veterans' movement prior to the 1925 formation of the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League (later the Royal Canadian Legion) also contributed to the relatively slow emergence of a truly national consciousness of the war in Canada (BOWERING 1960: 8ff; MORTON and WRIGHT 1987; SCOTT 1996: 35-40). The rapid construction in London of the Cenotaph and the presence of the Unknown Warrior, re-entombed beneath the main aisle of Westminster Abbey to represent the dead of the Empire without known graves, provided focal points for British national mourning, the King serving as chief mourner. There were no Canadian equivalents. The tower of the reconstructed Parliament building in Ottawa was dedicated to peace and contained a memorial chamber, but it was designed as a place of personal pilgrimage and was not opened to the public until 1928, still lacking its centrepiece. This, the Book of Remembrance containing the names of Canada's war dead, would not be completed until 1942¹ (HALE 1935; SCOTT 1934: 53ff). The National War Memorial in Ottawa was not dedicated until May 1939, only months before the outbreak of another war. Canada's largest overseas memorial, the soaring twin pillars on Vimy Ridge, was the first major national memorial to be dedicated, but even that was not until 1936, and it was located in France. As a result, local observances, centered around local memorials, were arguably even more important in Canada in the years immediately following the Armistice than they were in Britain. It was only gradually that these localized memories began to be acted out on a national scale.

For Canada, as for the rest of the Empire, the Great War began on 4 August 1914, when the British ultimatum demanding a German withdrawal from Belgium expired. The news was greeted with patriotic displays in many

¹ Interestingly, Hale writes as though the Book of Remembrance were already in place although, at the time she was writing, a Bible given in 1928 by the Prince of Wales was being used as a placeholder until the Book itself could be completed.

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major Canadian cities. On 6 August, Sam Hughes, the Minister of Militia and Defence, set about assembling volunteers for a Canadian contingent at an as-yet unbuilt camp at Valcartier, Quebec. On 10 August, an Order in Council established the authorized strength of this force at 25,000. After two months at Valcartier, this first overseas contingent, ultimately to become the 1st Canadian Infantry Division of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, set sail from Quebec City for England, somewhat over-strength at 30,617. By the time the 1st Division landed in France in February 1915, recruiting for a second, and then a third, contingent was well underway.

Among those “Old Originals” who made this journey from Valcartier to the trenches of the Western Front were two men whose names would later be known throughout the Canadian Corps — Brigadier Arthur Currie, then the commander of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade, and Canon F.G. Scott, an Anglican chaplain attached to the 3rd Brigade. Both men were present in the chaos and confusion of the first German gas attack on 22 April 1915, as untried Canadian troops rallied to prevent a German breakthrough. In the summer of 1916, they served during the latter stages of the great Somme battles, where one of Scott’s sons was killed in action. On 9 April 1917, Currie commanded the 1st Division at Vimy Ridge, with Scott serving as the Division’s Senior Chaplain. In June 1917, Currie was given command of the Canadian Corps and knighted on the battlefield by the King. Passchendaele was the Corps’ first major victory with a Canadian at its head. It was also the first in a series of victories that would lead through Amiens, the Canal du Nord — where Scott was wounded on the battlefield after four years of active service with “his boys” — then Cambrai, Valenciennes, and, on the morning of the Armistice, Mons (COOK 2007, 2008, 2011; DANCOCKS 1985; HYATT 1987; URQUHART 1950; MCGOWAN 2014; SCOTT 1922). While both Currie and Scott would survive to return home in 1919, some 60,000 of their comrades did not, losses that were mourned in communities large and small across the country.

The first observances of Armistice Day following 1918 were divided between those who wanted to celebrate the triumph of victory over Germany and those who wished the day to be kept sacred in commemoration of the dead (GREGORY 1994: 62ff). In those early years, veterans were still adjusting to civilian life, a process often complicated by mental and physical wounds. Friends and families had to re-acquaint themselves with men returning changed by their experiences and they had to come to terms with the permanent absence of those who had died overseas. Two minutes of silence observed at 11:00

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marked the moment when the guns had fallen silent, but Armistice Day itself was not a public holiday in Canada. Instead, people marked the Silence in the midst of their daily activities.

In Ottawa, national commemorations did not take on a consistent form. When ceremonies were held — there was no official ceremony in 1921 — they took place at a temporary cenotaph erected on Parliament Hill. These ceremonies were held in the afternoon or evening, separate from the Silence, in 1923, 1925, and from 1927-1929. Only in 1931 when, after two years of lobbying by veterans' groups, the government separated the Thanksgiving holiday from Armistice Day and made the latter a public holiday, re-naming it Remembrance Day, were official ceremonies permanently moved to 11:00 and able to take on a standardized form. It was at this point, with Canadian Legion participation in the planning of the ceremonies and people freer to take time away from work to attend ceremonies that veterans' involvement in the national ceremonies increased². Local observances, regularized in the 1920s, began gradually to follow the national pattern. In Toronto, for example, the Silence was observed at 11:00, with the laying of wreaths before and after, and city ceremonies not beginning until 12:00, at least until 1932 when the ceremony shifted to precede the Silence by up to forty-five minutes. Regimental and association memorials were held individually at the cenotaph throughout the day, often beginning in the early morning. The hour-long services were shortened in 1935 and, from that point, began at 11:00³.

Sir Arthur Currie (1933)

When Sir Arthur Currie died in 1933, after serving for more than thirteen years as the principal of McGill University, it was at a time when people's expressed memory of the Great War was undergoing a shift from a fragmented and localized memorialization to one on a more national scale (THOMSON 1995/1996; VANCE 1997: 212ff). Currie, as a veterans' advocate and a public figure, had been one of those helping to link these local memories into a larger consciousness, speaking to hundreds of veterans' groups and memorial dedications (BOWERING 1960; COOK 2011; CURRIE and

² Coverage of the national ceremony in Ottawa was traced for convenience through the digitized *Toronto Globe* (*Globe and Mail* after 1937) from 1914-1944. At time of writing, digitalization of local newspapers was less advanced and sufficient information for this general survey was obtained through the *Globe*.

³ Although the *Toronto Star* also covered the ceremonies, coverage in the *Toronto Globe* (later *Globe and Mail*) is more consistent for the period 1919-1944.

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HUMPRHRIES 2008; DANCOCKS 1985; DURFLINGER 2000; HYATT 1987; URQUHART 1950). By his presence at these local ceremonies and through his link to all the units of the Canadian Corps, Currie encouraged the formation of a national community bound together by their wartime experiences and sacrifices. Currie also helped advance a national narrative to the war in another way: by pursuing a libel case against the Port Hope *Evening Guide* in 1928 after the newspaper had printed old accusations that Currie had needlessly sacrificed the lives of soldiers under his command in the final hours before the Armistice, for the glory of capturing Mons (the site of the first British action of the war in 1914). In undertaking and winning the suit, Currie had not only successfully defended his own reputation as a battlefield commander, but had also rehearsed the story of Canadian participation in the war's final days to a national audience (COOK 2011; SHARPE 1988). In establishing that he had not squandered the lives of those under his command, Currie gave families reassurance that their losses had been meaningful and necessary contributions to the greater victory. Although the trial opened old wounds that some wished they had forgotten, the testimony of so many senior Canadian officers as to the necessity of the attack and the care taken to guard against casualties offered affirmation that the sacrifices made during the war had not been in vain (SHARPE 1988: 226). By re-establishing Currie's military reputation, the trial also set the stage for the massive outpouring of public mourning that was associated with Currie's death five years later.

On the afternoon of Tuesday, 5 December 1933, a group of ten men assembled around a radio in the lobby of the King Edward Hotel in Pincher Creek, Alberta. They were a small group, but, as they described themselves, "representative of not only His Majesty's war-time Forces, but many different walks in civilian life"⁴. They were only one of the many groups of Canadians across the country who tuned in to the Canadian Radio Broadcast Commission (CRBC) that afternoon to listen to the broadcast of the funeral service for Currie, who had died on 30 November 1933 as the result of a stroke suffered three weeks earlier⁵. They all heard the announcer read:

Today Canada is laying to rest one of the most eminent men of this generation [...] the professors in their robes, the students and the

⁴ Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Bennett Papers: microfilm 3186, 0615878.

⁵ The letter about the group in Pincher Creek is the only one preserved. A cover letter from the CRBC Director of Public Relations indicated "hundreds" of letters, presumably appreciative, were received about the Currie broadcast and only one was forwarded to the PMO as representative of the others received (LAC, Bennett Papers: microfilm 3186, 0615890).

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graduates are taking the body of their Principal to the Campus of McGill. There, in front of the old grey buildings, the casket is placed upon a gun-carriage; the Union Jack is draped over it, the naked sword and khaki cap are placed upon it, and for the last time the devoted Corps Commander is in the midst of his devoted men. The minute guns boom out in an artillery salute; *he* does not hear them⁶.

With the CRBC announcer setting the stage for the many Canadians participating vicariously, more than 200,000 people lined the procession route from Montreal's Christ Church Cathedral to the McGill campus; from the campus to the Cartier Monument, where Currie received a final salute; and from there up to Mount Royal Cemetery, where his body would be laid to rest⁷. Thousands more marched in the procession :

To the accompaniment of pipers and drums and brass bands, regiment after regiment, each one preceded by its own battalion war veterans, marched past the bier saluting it as they went by. [...] It was a mingling of khaki and civilian-clad men; but with the approach to the end of the long column came the main body of veterans of the Great War [...] They were again the well-disciplined soldiers whom Sir Arthur Currie had led, the men who had seen the war from Ypres to Mons⁸.

Three hours after the head of the procession left the McGill campus to the echoing sound of a seventeen-gun artillery salute, the coffin reached the graveside⁹. Microphones picked up the words of the burial service. Then, at a low word of command spoken in Montreal, the little band of men in Pincher Creek rose to attention and the bugle calls — "the Last Post and the Reveille" — rang out from the graveside and across the nation¹⁰.

The tributes to Currie published in the major Canadian newspapers in the days between his death and the public funeral had emphasized both his military success and his continued public service for veterans and at McGill,

⁶ (Jan. 1934), "The Funeral of General Sir Arthur Currie," *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, 11:2, pp. 156-158; also LAC, R1190-36-2-E, vol. 242, file 11-37-11.

⁷ The crowd was estimated at 200,00 along the small portion of the procession route along Sherbrooke Street from Mansfield to Bleury. All photographs show large crowds along the whole procession route, but no other estimate of the overall crowd size was found in the materials surveyed (*Montreal Herald*, 6 Dec 1944: 3).

⁸ *Toronto Globe*, 6 Dec 1933: 1-2.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ LAC, Bennett, microfilm 3186, 0615878

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painting a picture of Currie as a civilian who had stepped up in the hour of need and who had returned after the Armistice to continue to serve the nation. The structure of the funeral service also emphasized Currie as a citizen-soldier, with the civilian funeral at Montreal's Christ Church Cathedral followed by a military procession to the graveside service, which was presided over by Archdeacon John Almond, the former Senior Protestant Chaplain to the Canadians Corps¹¹. Because this was the popular understanding of Canadian Great War soldiers more generally, viewing Currie as another citizen soldier facilitated identification with him¹² (SHARPE 1988; WOOD 2010: 210ff). Nor was this the only way in which Currie became emblematic of the broader Canadian war experience. Currie had been one of the "Old Originals" to enlist in the autumn of 1914 and the record of his war service was the record of the men he had commanded — in this way, Currie had been with the men almost everywhere they had fought and died on the Western Front. Those who had lost friends and relatives during the war could, by participating in the various local and national memorial activities, be linked symbolically to their own lost loved ones in Flanders and France. As Currie's body lay in state, among the hundreds who filed past, some reaching out to touch his hand, were the mothers of soldiers¹³.

For veterans, Currie was one of their numbers. Although there were those who bore resentment toward the high command, there were others who were convinced that Currie had done his best for them under difficult conditions. Recorded in the McGill University Archive is the story of one veteran, "Mac", who travelled from Eastern Ontario to attend the funeral because Currie was a "real guy — a real Canadian" who had "risked his own job to keep a whole host of Canadians from going to their own funerals in August, 1918"¹⁴. Currie's advocacy on behalf of pension reform and his involvement, however honorary, with the Canadian Legion and the Last Post Fund (a charity which provided burials for veterans who died in poverty) also raised his standing among veterans. For veterans too, Currie could be a symbolic figure linking them to their war service and their fallen comrades. Tributes to Currie were often a recitation of the victories of the Canadian

¹¹ In particular *Calgary Herald*, *Halifax Herald*, *Montreal Herald and Gazette*, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Toronto Globe and Star*, *McGill Daily*, *Le Devoir*. Also *McGill News* Dec 1933; *Canadian Defence Quarterly* Jan 1934; *Queen's Quarterly Spring* 1934. McGill University Archives (MUA) has a scrapbook of British obituaries; coverage is similar, albeit with more focus on Currie's military achievements, particularly Passchendaele.

¹² MUA, Urquhart, File 13

¹³ *Toronto Star* 4 Dec 1933: 1-2.

¹⁴ McGill University Archives (MUA), Currie scrapbook.

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Corps, victories of which veterans could rightly feel themselves a part. Several veterans' groups were among those who suggested that Currie be buried in the Peace Tower, a suggestion that was impractical but nonetheless indicative of the iconic status that Currie had assumed¹⁵. On the day of Currie's funeral, the front page of the *Toronto Globe*, which had been carrying tributes to Currie since his death, instead displayed photographs of the great memorial under construction on Vimy Ridge¹⁶. Finally, although veterans had been playing a larger role in Remembrance Day commemorations, the memorial events associated with Currie's death provided another opportunity to gather with fellow veterans to remember the war — although such events arose relatively infrequently, Haig's 1925 tour, the 1934 Canadian Corps reunion, and the 1936 Vimy Pilgrimage also attracted large numbers. These events were similar opportunities for veterans to gather, renew old associations, and to remember, both publicly and privately (BROWN and COOK 2011: 37-54; LLOYD 1998: 181-183, 192-193, 198-208; MURRAY 1936; SCOTT 1934; SCOTT 1996: 35-40; VANCE 1995: 327-344).

The public mourning for Currie took place on an unprecedented scale. A memorial service was held, with the Canadian government's blessing, at Westminster Abbey the same day as the funeral in Montreal. Hundreds of floral tributes were received and the dignitaries present at the funeral included the Governor General, the Earl of Bessborough; Prime Minister R.B. Bennett and Leader of the Opposition Mackenzie King; L.-A. Taschereau, the Premier of Quebec; and official diplomatic representation from Britain, France, the United States and Japan¹⁷. Sir Robert Borden recorded that the ceremonial for Currie "was perhaps more elaborate than at any state or military funeral in the history of Canada. Neither Sir John A. Macdonald nor Sir Wilfrid Laurier received such a tribute. The future historian will have to judge whether Currie's service was comparable with theirs." (quoted HYATT 1987: 144) Impressive as Currie's personal achievements and service were, his funeral in some ways became a collective memorial for the 60,000 war-dead. Currie was being honoured for the achievements and sacrifices made by Canada during the war.

¹⁵ Preserved telegrams making the request arrived from the British Campaigner's Association (Victoria); 19th Batt. Branch Canadian Legion (Toronto); and Premier T.D. Pattullo of British Columbia, who mentions having received many requests to this effect, but not who made the requests (LAC, Bennett, microfilm 3186, 0615863 and 0615873-4).

¹⁶ *Toronto Globe*, 5 Dec. 1933: 1.

¹⁷ For a list of more than 170 organizations which sent floral tributes, see the list in "Homage Shown by Floral Tributes," *Montreal Herald*, 5 Dec 1933, p. 5. For more information about the mechanics of the funeral itself, including a seating chart and other arrangements, see MUA, RG 7, Box 52, File 957, Currie Funeral File.

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Canon Scott, the well-known and well-respected Senior Chaplain of the 1st Division made this point clearly at one of the Toronto veterans' memorials held for Currie, telling the assembled crowd:

Sir Arthur was a Canadian first and foremost. We all felt that. He was one of us. To us, he was the impersonation of Canada. And today it is as our greatest Canadian that we mourn for him. He has placed an ideal that is distinctly Canadian high up in the Hall of Fame. Surely "failing hands" have thrown to Canada a torch which, in honour to her great dead, she must ever hold high¹⁸.

Canon F.G. Scott (1944)

But Sir Arthur Currie was not the only iconic figure to emerge from the Great War. Canon Frederick George Scott was himself another. Like Currie, Scott was an 'Old Original' who had served for four years at the front. An Anglican clergyman and volunteer militia chaplain before the war, Scott had been with the CEF since Valcartier. His work as a brigade chaplain and later the Senior Chaplain of the 1st Division took him into tents, dugouts, aid stations, hospitals, and YMCA huts, where he met and comforted thousands of Canadian soldiers. Not shying away from the front, Scott was mentioned in Dispatches four times and awarded the Distinguished Service Order in 1918; he was wounded by shrapnel during the battle for the Canal du Nord in September 1918, six weeks before the Armistice. Three of his sons also saw service overseas, one of whom was killed in action.¹⁹ Demobilized in 1919, he returned to his parish, St. Matthew's Church in the heart of Quebec City.

A published poet before the war, in 1922 Scott published *The Great War as I Saw It*, a memoir of his war experiences. It was serialized in full by the *Toronto Star* and portions were printed in fourteen other Canadian dailies, reaching an even wider audience (McGOWAN 2014: xxx). More than 4,500 former soldiers signed Scott's copy of the book, a testament to his popularity among veterans and to the strength of the impression he had made during the

¹⁸ *Toronto Globe* 4 Dec 1933: 1-2; see also *Toronto Star* 4 Dec 1933: 2.

¹⁹ W.B. Scott was invalided out of the CEF for an eye wound in March 1915. Elton Scott joined the artillery in 1916 and was badly gassed at least once. H.H. Scott died near Albert on the Somme in October 1916 — the most famous passage of *The Great War as I Saw It* is Scott's account of finding his son's battlefield grave, pp. 154-185.

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war.²⁰ Briefly appearing against orders at the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike in an attempt to calm the situation, Scott remained a vocal advocate for veterans throughout the inter-war period and spoke out against the social problems exacerbated by the Depression, using his post-war popularity to advocate for social reform²¹ (PULKER 1986). He too was a popular speaker at memorial services, war memorial dedications, and veterans' gatherings, including the 1934 Canadian Corps reunion²² (VANCE 1995: 336-337; SCOTT 1934). Although, to the dismay of many, he played no official role in the 1936 Vimy Pilgrimage, he wrote several reflective columns during the event for the Toronto *Star* and took part in an unofficial ceremony which scattered the ashes of wooden crosses that had once marked the graves of Canadian soldiers on the base of the newly-dedicated monument²³. Although he was seventy-eight when war broke out again later that year, Scott — who remained the honorary chaplain of the Royal Rifles of Canada — immediately offered his services to the government, which respectfully declined. He nonetheless put out a booklet of war poems in 1941, the royalties of which were donated to the Queen's Fund for the relief of British civilian war victims (SCOTT 1941).

In the decade between Currie's death in 1933 and Scott's in 1944, the immediacy of the Great War experience continued to fade, but the individual and shared memories of the conflict retained some of their power. The 1936 Vimy Pilgrimage took 8,000 veterans and family members to France for the unveiling and dedication of the Vimy Memorial, a ceremony which was broadcast nationally by the CRBC. As a battle, Vimy had long been considered a crowning national success, the first time the four divisions of the Canadian Corps had fought together and the first in a series of Canadian victories that ultimately led to Mons. The dedication ceremony itself was an important assertion of Canadian sovereignty and national feeling, with the King, who had served briefly during the war with a Canadian unit, proceeding to France by Canadian invitation. During the ceremony, 'O Canada' was treated as a distinctive Canadian anthem, joining 'God Save the King.' For many, this was a culmination of a process begun on the battlefields, first recognized with Canada's independent signature on the Treaty of Versailles and finally

²⁰ The second edition, published in 1934, contained a printed list of all those who had signed to that date. Scott's signed copy is held by LAC in the F.G. Scott fonds.

²¹ McCord Museum Archives (MMA) P229; LAC MG30-D211, vol. 28.

²² MMA P229.

²³ See Toronto *Star*: "Vimy Veterans Thrill to Old War Memories," 25 July 1916, pp. 1-2; "Recall Old Landmarks Though War Scars Fade," 27 July 1933, pp. 1, 7; "Archdeacon Scott Sees Hatred, Suffering Erased," 28 July 1936, pp. 1-2; "War Scars Have Vanished from Somme Countryside," 31 July 1936, p. 14.

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enshrined by the 1931 Statute of Westminster (MURRAY 1936; VANCE 2007: 265-277; VANCE 1997: 56-60, 67-70, 233).

As the threat of war loomed again in Europe in the following years, the memory of the Great War was harnessed for other purposes. The winged figures of liberty and peace were lowered in place atop the arch of the National War Memorial in Ottawa by Prime Minister Mackenzie King on 30 September 1938, the same day that Neville Chamberlain and Adolf Hitler signed the Munich Agreement. "The two figures of liberty and peace are now in place," King declared, describing both the action and expressing Canada's hope for a lasting European peace, arrangements at the almost-completed memorial having been "deliberately speeded up [...] so that this day would mark Canada's feeling concerning the peace pact in Europe." King made no reference to the war that the memorial was intended to commemorate²⁴. The memorial was dedicated on 21 May 1939 by King George VI as part of the Royal Tour, an important reminder of the ties that had drawn Canadian soldiers to war in 1914 as it became increasingly clear that Munich had not brought "peace for our time"²⁵.

From September 1939, another World War called for renewed Canadian resolve and sacrifice. Recruits for the new war now stood behind the Great War veterans as the two minutes of silence in memory of those who had "'trod the path to victory' in the Great War" was observed²⁶. All were aware that some of these recruits would join the ranks of the fallen before peace returned. In 1940, the national Remembrance Day ceremony was held for the first time at the memorial that had been dedicated the previous year — the ceremony was curtailed, lasting little more than five minutes, including the two minutes of silence. At this point, the Great War was no longer singular in the national consciousness, and, in 1942, Remembrance Day ceased to be a federal holiday to avoid slowing war production. The ongoing struggle and the more recent Canadian casualties were superimposed on the Canadian memory of the Great War. After the end of the Second World War, the two would become linked in stone, with the dates 1939-1945 added to the existing memorials.

Although Scott, who continued to be known as "Canon Scott" despite his elevation to the archdeaconate in 1925, was not as influential or conventionally famous as Currie had been, he was nonetheless a significant

²⁴ *Toronto Globe and Mail* 1 Oct 1938: 2.

²⁵ *Toronto Globe and Mail* and *Star* 22 May 1939

²⁶ *Toronto Globe and Mail* 13 Nov 1939: 3

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figure in the war experiences of thousands of Canadian veterans and was known more generally through his writing and social advocacy. When he died of pneumonia in a Quebec City hospital on 19 January 1944, his passing was announced in newspapers, large and small, across the country²⁷. These announcements were brief, unlike the frontpage eulogies that had run during the days following Currie's death, because the significance of Scott's life and death were in the personal experiences and encounters. Unlike Currie, who had, in some ways, stood in for the Canadian Corps, the story of Scott's life and war service were not recounted. Nonetheless, in Quebec City and Montreal, where a two-part funeral service was held, thousands of friends and veterans lined the sidewalks, marched through the streets, and packed the churches to pay their respects. Honoured with a military burial, in attendance in Montreal were Major-General Eugène Fiset, veteran of the Boer War and Great War and Lieutenant Governor of Quebec; the officer commanding the Quebec Military District; officers of National Defence Headquarters and the General Staff; and representatives from Col. J.A. Ralston, Defence Minister, and C.G. Power, Air Minister, both veterans of the Great War. Scott's casket, draped with the Union Jack that had been his altar cloth in Flanders and France, was attended by the senior Protestant chaplain of the current war and by serving members of the Royal Montreal Regiment and the Royal Rifles of Canada. Two of Scott's war poems were read as part of the service and a rifle salute was fired over the grave²⁸.

While public mourning for Currie in 1933 can be compared to that of Field Marshal Earl Haig in 1928 in terms of time period, the extent of the public reaction, and the way both generals were treated as symbolic figures representing the wider war experience (TODMAN 2003), there is no easy comparison either in Britain or the other Commonwealth countries for the significant level of mourning for Scott. Woodbine Willie (Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy) was arguably Britain's most popular wartime chaplain and his post-war career paralleled that of Scott, but Kennedy died in 1929. His funeral was attended by more than 2,000, with thousands more lining the streets (WALTERS 2008: 2, 9-21). In smaller centres and in the middle of another war, the events surrounding Scott's death — the funeral in St. Matthew's Quebec City; the transportation of the body by train to Montreal; and the memorial service held in Christ Church Cathedral before the private burial —

²⁷ Clippings about Scott's death, funeral, and/or local memorial services from more than ninety different publications, both English and French, from every province are preserved in MMA P229, Box 7.

²⁸ Toronto *Globe and Mail* and *Star* 19-24 Jan 1944

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all attracted large crowds, although the numbers and composition are impossible to determine with any certainty.

Unlike public mourning for Currie, which took place within a relatively contained period of time between Currie's death and his funeral, memorial events held for Scott took place over a longer period of time. There are references to memorial services, largely but not exclusively organized by veterans' groups, being held in Ottawa (January 1944), Quebec City (January 1944), Vancouver (spring 1944), Toronto (March and June 1944), New York (April 1944), and two in London, Ontario (November 1944). Two veterans' magazines, *The Legionary* and *The Torch*, published tribute editions in February 1944, and there is evidence that individual Legion branches also organized services or paid tribute during a normal meeting, but these smaller tributes are more difficult to trace unless they were particularly brought to the attention of the family.

Hundreds of letters were received by the Scott family in the months following Canon Scott's death, many of them from veterans' groups and Legion branches or from individual veterans who mentioned having met Scott while serving overseas²⁹. One ex-serviceman wrote:

I with so many others, first met your father in the front-line trenches of the last war [...] his parting words were always of a cheery nature and on and on he traveled to pay his visit to other comrades. It seemed that every dug-out he visited became a home, rather than a borrowed dwelling. [...] I thank Canon Scott and have a thousand times for sharing our troubles, at times our misery during and after battles, and for sharing and contributing to our joy and comfort³⁰.

Others knew Scott by reputation and through his writing. Another veteran noted:

I am one of that vast multitude of men who loved your father and respected him above all others. He was a legend to those of us who served in the ranks, but serving in the Third Division, I did not get to know him personally. Then a friend in Montreal gave me his book "The Great War As I Saw It" and from then on I was another disciple. [...]

²⁹ MMA P229, Box 7; LAC MG30-D211, vol. 28, Box 7.

³⁰ LAC MG30-D211, vol. 28, letter N.E. Pengelly to F.R. Scott, 20 Jan 1944.

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All old soldiers will be present at the funeral in spirit and we shall always remember him as Canada's most loved son³¹.

Like Currie, Scott was a citizen-soldier who had returned to Canada in the post-war period and continued to serve its people. And, like Currie, Scott served as an important link to the experiences of the Great War. But, unlike in 1933, when the Great War experience was singular in the national consciousness and the nation-wide mourning for Currie seems to have represented, at least on some level, part of the larger Canadian experience, when Scott died in 1944 the memory of the Great War was part of a larger narrative which included the ongoing sacrifices being made during the Second World War.

By the time the first Book of Remembrance was dedicated and placed in the Peace Tower's Memorial Chamber, there was already need of a second one. In contrast to this larger narrative of war and sacrifice, which was increasingly bound together at a national level, replacing the particularity of the Great War at Remembrance Day observances, the distinctive memory of the Great War had once again become primarily a matter of personal observance. In the middle of the Second World War, the memory of the Great War as a distinctive event was being acted out on an individual and local scale by those who had been most affected by it. In part because of his personal encounters with thousands of Canadian servicemen during the war and veterans after it, Scott was an iconic figure that loomed large in memories, even a quarter-century after the Armistice, and his death was an occasion for Canadian Great War veterans to recall, both individually and as part of a larger community of memory, their own experiences. In contrast to the localized remembrance of the early 1920s, when almost all could recall the war experience in their own way, the community involved in remembering the Great War in the 1940s was much smaller and increasingly restricted to those who had survived the trenches as the more immediate experience of war re-shaped the wider Canadian collective memory.

Conclusion

After the guns fell silent in Europe on 11 November 1918, the long process of adjustment and mourning began. It took time for individuals to come to terms with the legacy of the previous four years and their own personal losses. This paper has used two events, the death of General Sir Arthur Currie

³¹ LAC MG30-D211, vol. 28, letter E.A. Belding to F.R. Scott, 21 Jan 1944

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and that of Canon F.G. Scott, to illuminate elements of the evolution of the Canadian memory of the Great War at two key stages. The focus on formal and public expressions and the involvement of veterans in both events has left largely unexplored the private grief of those who lost loved ones and how this changed across the period, but the archival record is unfortunately silent on this matter.

This paper has also been unable to examine more than briefly the evolution of local and national commemorative rituals, a subject which remains a major and regrettable gap in the Canadian historiography. In the first decade after the war, it was these local commemorations that did the most to shape the Canadian memory of the war. By the time of Sir Arthur Currie's death in 1933, the collective memory of the Great War was being acted out on a larger scale, with an increasing emphasis on national figures, themes, and commemorations. This process was facilitated by a number of factors, including the increased lobbying power of the Canadian Legion after 1925, the 1931 government decision to make Remembrance Day a federal holiday, and national broadcasts of commemorative events, including Currie's funeral and the dedication of the Vimy Memorial. This process continued until the threat of another European war caused the memory of the Great War to be co-opted for other purposes, and the outbreak of the Second World War added a new generation of sacrifices and meanings to the older commemorative forms. But, as the expressions of mourning at the death of Canon Scott show, the memory of the Great War maintained its importance for those who had been most directly affected by it, although this memory had once again become a matter for local and individual commemoration.

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