NOVEMBER 11, 2022

PORTRAITS OF VALOUR
TO HONOUR AND RESPECT

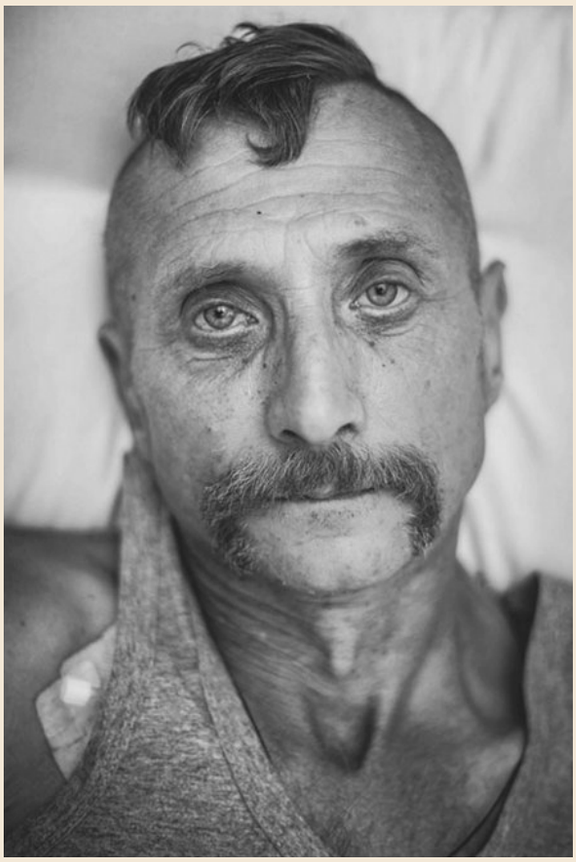
On Remembrance Day today, we are reflecting on Canadian works that explore the contributions, sacrifices, and resilience of those who have served our country in pursuit of peace and justice.

Since the end of the First World War on November 11, 1918, Canadians have paused on this day every year to remember soldiers killed in the line of duty. How do we ensure that their heroism, impact, and stories are never forgotten? As the selections below reveal, artists have harnessed the unique power and immediacy of portraiture to bring us closer to military personnel, fallen members of the armed forces, and surviving veterans. Some of the featured works honour the contributions of individuals whom history has overlooked, such as the Black Canadian servicemen who fought in the War of 1812. Others offer unflinching insight into the everyday lives of soldiers, including Gertrude Kearns's depiction of the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder. As Russia's war in Ukraine continues to have a devastating impact, Remembrance Day this year is an opportunity to reflect on the horrors of war as well as to honour the sacrifices of soldiers past and present, both in Canada and abroad.

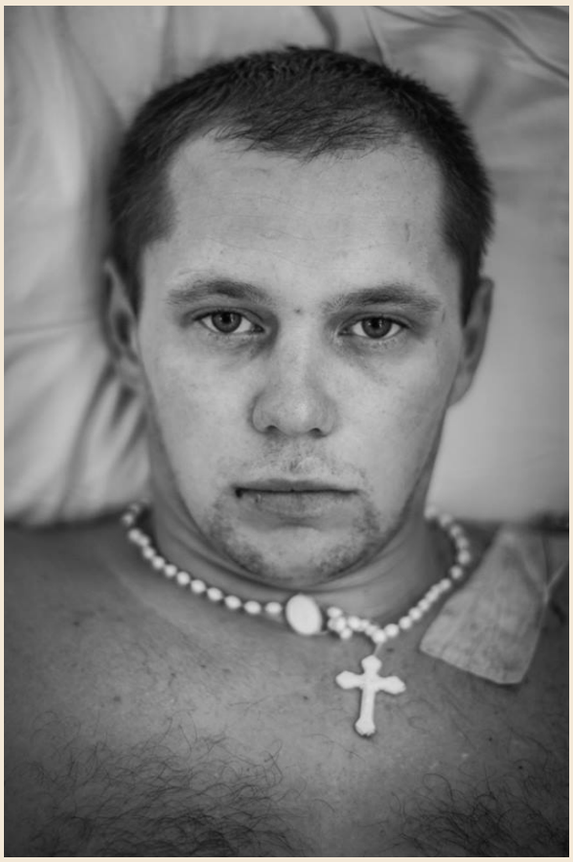
Sara Angel
Founder and Executive Director, Art Canada Institute

WAR. 11 PORTRAITS

by Taras Polataiko



Taras Polataiko, *Vasyl*, 2014, from the series War. 11 Portraits, Courtesy of Barbara Edwards Contemporary, Calgary.



Taras Polataiko, *Oleh*, 2014, from the series War. 11 Portraits, Courtesy of Barbara Edwards Contemporary, Calgary.

In these large-scale black-and-white portraits, two men, photographed in bed from the chest up, regard their viewers with an unflinching, stoic gaze. The haunting images are part of Vancouver-based, Ukrainian Canadian artist Taras Polataiko's (b.1966) War. 11 Portraits series, which commemorates combatants bedridden in the Central Military Clinical Hospital in Kyiv in the wake of Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea. "War involves everyone in its orbit," says the artist. "Depriving us of a sense of a peaceful life, it leaves virtually no room for concentrated everyday work. Hope for the future rests on the shoulders of the heroes—such men as are the subject of this art project."

Explore the current exhibition
The Polataiko Project at BEC Project Space

Watch a CBC interview with the artist about his fundraising efforts for Ukrainian soldiers

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THE 104TH (NEW BRUNSWICK) REGIMENT OF FOOT

by Robert John Marrion

Robert John Marrion, *The 104th (New Brunswick) Regiment of Foot*, 1971, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa.

This painting of a Black Canadian soldier by military historian and illustrator Robert John Marrion (1929–2015) depicts a uniformed member of the 104th New Brunswick Regiment of Foot, a division of the British Army tasked with the defence of the colony of New Brunswick during the War of 1812. The unit consisted of around six hundred men who treacherously snowshoed over one thousand kilometres from Fredericton, New Brunswick, to Kingston, Ontario, in 1813 in order to assist Upper Canada against an American invasion. The work reminds us of the contributions and sacrifices of Black Canadians within Canadian military history—these complex stories have been largely ignored or effaced from official narratives.

Learn More

R.C.A.[F.] OFFICER DOING HANDICRAFT THERAPY, NO. 1 CANADIAN GENERAL HOSPITAL, TAPLOW, ENGLAND

by George Campbell Tinning

George Campbell Tinning, *R.C.A.[F.] Officer Doing Handicraft Therapy, No. 1 Canadian General Hospital, Taplow, England*, 1945, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa.

This tender watercolour of a bedridden officer engaging in handicraft therapy at Canadian General Hospital in Taplow, England, was one of many depictions of military life painted by Saskatoon-born George Campbell Tinning (1910–1996) over the course of his service as an official war artist during the Second World War. In contrast to more common scenes of military activity, weaponry, and technology, the artist has chosen to portray a wounded officer participating in a quiet rehabilitative activity. The humanistic approach underlines the resilience of these soldiers as well as the cost of the war on the everyday lives of veterans.

Read more in ACI's
War Art in Canada: A Critical History by Laura Brandon

DESIGN FOR YEAR OF THE VETERAN QUARTER

by Elaine Goble

Elaine Goble, *Design for Year of the Veteran Quarter*, 2005, Royal Canadian Mint, Ottawa.

Ottawa-based artist Elaine Goble (b.1956) created the design for this Year of the Veteran quarter. It features the profiles of two veterans, young and old, in reference to those who served in the First and Second World Wars and the Korean War, and those who in more recent years were deployed to contemporary war zones such as Afghanistan and Yugoslavia. The commemorative coin was released in 2005 by the Royal Canadian Mint to unite the different generations of Canadian Armed Forces personnel and to honour their sacrifices and love for their country.

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RANGER SHEILA KADJUK (CHESTERFIELD INLET) 1ST CANADIAN RANGER PATROL GROUP, RANKIN INLET, NUNAVUT

by Rosalie Favell

Rosalie Favell, *Ranger Sheila Kadjuk (Chesterfield Inlet) 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, Rankin Inlet, Nunavut*, 2017, Collection of the artist.

This image of Canadian Ranger Sheila Kadjuk at Chesterfield Inlet, Nunavut, was taken in 2017 by Winnipeg-born Métis artist Rosalie Favell (b.1958) during her time in the Canadian Forces Artists Program. She was deployed with the Canadian Rangers, who provide a military presence in northern, isolated areas of the country, teaching survival skills to their colleagues in the Canadian Armed Forces. “Indigenous people were on the land from the beginning, and they welcomed visitors to their land and helped them survive and showed them a way of life to live off of that land,” says the artist, who sees the Rangers as continuing that vital tradition.

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INJURED: PTSD

by Gertrude Kearns

Gertrude Kearns, *Injured: PTSD*, 2002, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa.

This portrait of a uniformed soldier staring off into the distance with a weathered, troubled gaze was painted by Toronto-born artist Gertrude Kearns (b.1950) after she was commissioned by Veterans Affairs Canada to create a work that highlighted the psychiatric condition of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and its impact on Canadian veterans. *Injured: PTSD*, 2002, depicts an anonymous officer with no obvious physical injuries, yet the stretcher to his left and his wary expression hint at the presence of a complex, underlying pain and loss. In 2019 Kearns was appointed to the Order of Canada in recognition of her decades-long career dedicated to our country's war art.

Read more in ACI's
War Art in Canada: A Critical History by Laura Brandon

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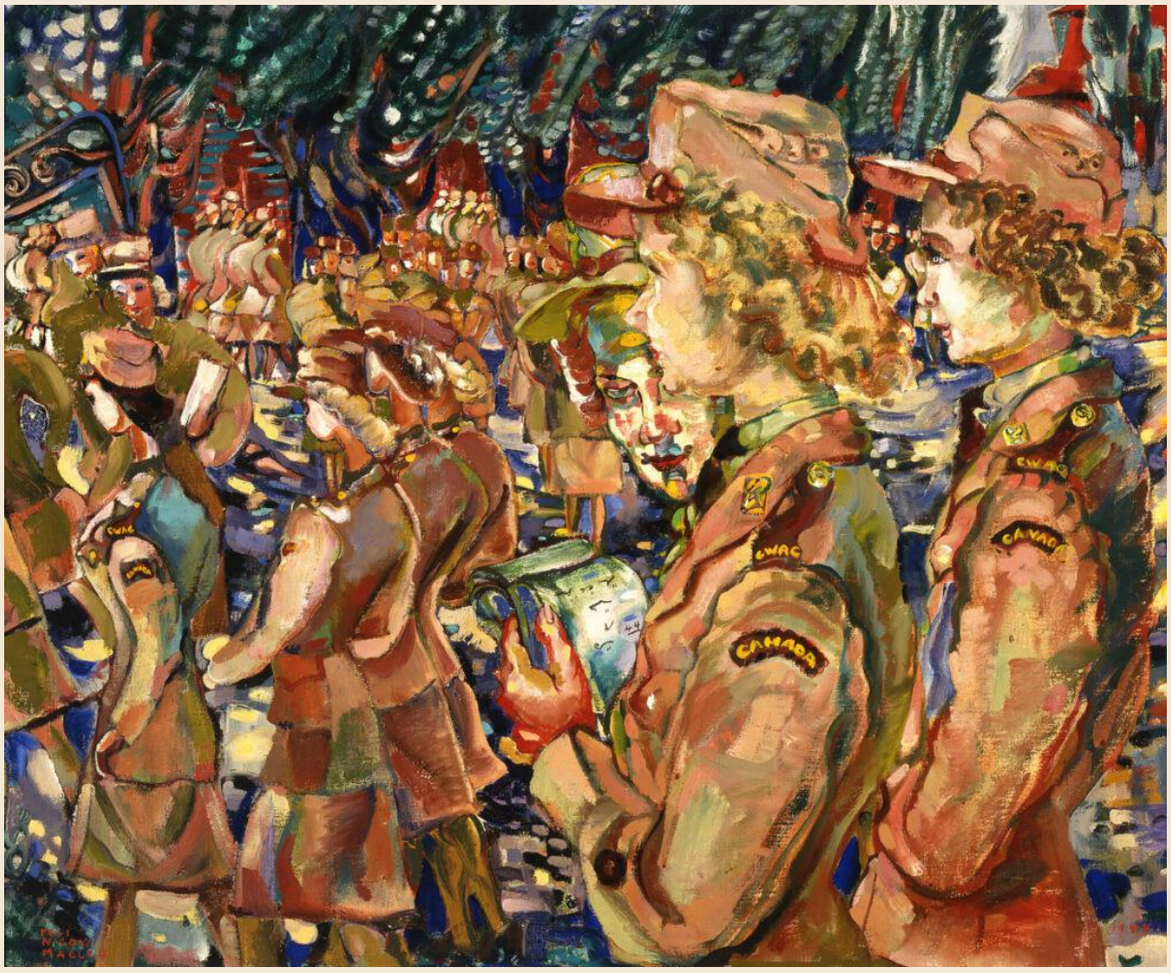
MORNING PARADE

by Pegi Nicol MacLeod



Pegi Nicol MacLeod, *Morning Parade*, 1944, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa.

This dynamic canvas by Ontario-born Pegi Nicol MacLeod (1904–1949) portrays a colourful parade of marching women who served in the Royal Canadian Air Force's Women's Division during the Second World War. From 1944 to 1945, the artist was commissioned to paint the Canadian Women's Army Corps, a new, female-only division of the Armed Forces. "It is unfair enough to leave out the mothers of soldiers, the nurses, the factory girls," wrote MacLeod to a friend in 1944, reflecting her concern with capturing the contributions of women, both on and off duty, to the war effort. "What an obvious flaw to neglect also the women in the armed services."

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War Art in Canada: A Critical History by Laura Brandon

THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

by Mary-Ann Liu

Mary-Ann Liu, *The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*, 2000, Confederation Square, Ottawa.

On every Remembrance Day since its installation in 2000, crowds of Ottawans have gathered in Confederation Square to place poppies on a monument that holds the remains of an unidentified soldier who died in France during the Battle of Vimy Ridge in the First World War. The bronze relief sculpture that decorates the sarcophagus features a sword and helmet surrounded by branches of maple and laurel leaves designed by Mission, B.C.-based sculptor Mary-Ann Liu. When the work was first revealed, people flooded toward it, kneeling before *The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier* to touch and kiss it. After witnessing the reaction, Liu reflected, "It really struck home what sacrifice meant....It was a very touching experience."

Read more in ACI's
War Art in Canada: A Critical History by Laura Brandon

GUARD POST – REFUELLING STOP – SINAI

by Geoffrey Jamieson

Geoffrey Jamieson, *Guard Post – Refuelling Stop – Sinai*, 1975, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa.

In Calgary artist Geoffrey Jamieson's (1931–2017) *Guard Post – Refuelling Stop – Sinai*, 1975, a faceless United Nations soldier stands in a corrugated-iron hut; he is stationed in the Sinai Peninsula desert that forms the border between Israel and Egypt. The desolate, isolated background and rigid, alert stance of the subject emphasizes the gruelling nature of the task and the soldier's dedication to duty. Jamieson served as a medical officer in the Canadian Armed Forces for over two decades as well as being a war artist for the Canadian Armed Forces Civilian Artists Program (CAFCAP), which was created during the Cold War and ran from 1968 to 1995.

Read more in ACI's
War Art in Canada: A Critical History by Laura Brandon

OH, CANADA – A LAMENT

by Joanne Tod

Joanne Tod, *Oh, Canada–A Lament* (detail), 2007–2011, installation view, Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum, Hamilton International Airport, Mount Hope, 2010, photograph by Michael Cullen.

Montreal-born artist Joanne Tod (b.1953) created *Oh, Canada – A Lament* as a tribute to the soldiers who died during Canada's operations in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014. The series is made up of 159 small-scale portraits that honour and memorialize the individuality of the men and women who died during the longest military mission in Canadian history. "I feel really strongly that I have to do this," Tod says. "I feel a real compulsion to say, 'This is what's happened, and this is truly the toll.'" By painting the soldiers, the artist explains, "I feel as if I've known them a little bit."

Learn more about Joanne Tod

CAPTAIN GUY DRUMMOND

by Robert Tait McKenzie

Robert Tait McKenzie, *Captain Guy Drummond*, after April 1915, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa.

This small bronze sculpture commemorates the sacrifice of Guy Drummond, who was killed at the age of twenty-seven in April 1915, during the Second Battle of Ypres. It portrays the young soldier standing proudly upright in his military uniform, his hands resting on his officer's sword. The work was commissioned by Drummond's wealthy family—he was the son of Sir George Drummond, former president of the Bank of Montreal—and was created by Ontario doctor and sculptor Robert Tait McKenzie (1867–1938). It served as a personal family memorial before later becoming part of the collection of the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa.

Read more in ACI's
War Art in Canada: A Critical History by Laura Brandon

MASTER CORPORAL JAMIE GILLMAN 2010 AND CORPORAL PERCY BEDDARD 2010

by Adrian Stimson

Adrian Stimson, *Master Corporal Jamie Gillman 2010*, 2011–12, Collection of the artist.

Adrian Stimson, *Corporal Percy Beddard 2010*, 2011–12, Collection of the artist.

These large-scale canvases by interdisciplinary artist Adrian Stimson (b.1964) portray two Indigenous servicemen in military uniform, standing against a flattened, blood-red background that emphasizes both their individuality and sacrifice. In 2010, as a participant in the Canadian Forces Artists Program (CFAP), Stimson was stationed at Forward Operating Base Ma'sum Ghar in Kandahar, Afghanistan. There, he met Master Corporal Jamie Gillman and Corporal Percy Beddard, the subjects of these full-length portraits. The artist, who is a member of the Siksika (Blackfoot) Nation in southern Alberta, commented that the goal of his project was "to honour that history of Indigenous service in the military."

Read more in ACI's
War Art in Canada: A Critical History by Laura Brandon

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Image Credits: **[1]** Taras Polataiko, *Vasyl*, 2014, from the series War. 11 Portraits, photographic print, 162.56 x 109.22 cm. Courtesy of Taras Polataiko and Barbara Edwards Contemporary, Calgary. **[2]** Taras Polataiko, *Oleh*, 2014, from the series War. 11 Portraits, archival inkjet print, 162.56 x 109.22 cm. Courtesy of Barbara Edwards Contemporary, Calgary. **[3]** Robert John Marrion, *The 104th (New Brunswick) Regiment of Foot*, 1971, watercolour on art board, 37.3 x 23.5 cm. Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum (CWM 19810948-008). **[4]** George Campbell Tinning, *R.C.A.[F.] Officer Doing Handicraft Therapy, No. 1 Canadian General Hospital, Taplow, England*, 1945, watercolour on paper, 38.5 x 57 cm. Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa (CWM 20120016-001). Courtesy of the Canadian War Museum. **[5]** Elaine Goble, *Design for Year of the Veteran Quarter*, 2005. Collection of the Royal Canadian Mint, Ottawa. Courtesy of the Royal Canadian Mint. © Royal Canadian Mint.**[6]** Rosalie Favell, *Ranger Sheila Kadjuk (Chesterfield Inlet) 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, Rankin Inlet, Nunavut*, 2017, photograph. Courtesy of the artist. © Rosalie Favell. **[7]** Gertrude Kearns, *Injured: PTSD*, 2002, acrylic on canvas, 191 x 145 cm. Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa (CWM 20050005-001). Courtesy of the Canadian War Museum. **[8]** Pegi Nicol MacLeod, *Morning Parade*, 1944, oil on canvas, 76.5 x 91.8 cm. Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa (CWM 19710261-5784). Courtesy of the Canadian War Museum. **[9]** Mary-Ann Liu, *The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*, 2000, granite, bronze, 350 x 250 cm, Confederation Square, Ottawa. Courtesy of iStock. Photo Credit: Dougall Photography. **[10]** Geoffrey Jamieson, *Guard Post – Refuelling Stop – Sinai*, 1975, watercolour on paper, 27.2 x 18.5 cm, Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa (CWM 19750564-004). Courtesy of the Canadian War Museum. **[11]** Joanne Tod, *Oh, Canada–A Lament* (detail), 2007–11, all works, oil on birch panel, 15.24 x 12.7 cm, installation view, Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum, Hamilton International Airport, Mount Hope, 2010. Courtesy of Joanne Tod. Photo credit: Michael Cullen. **[12]** Robert Tait McKenzie, *Captain Guy Drummond*, after April 1915, bronze, 94 x 34 x 34 cm. Beaverbrook Collection of War Art, Canadian War Museum, Ottawa (CWM 19780063-001). Courtesy of the Canadian War Museum. **[13]** Adrian Stimson, *Master Corporal Jamie Gillman 2010*, 2011–12, oil on canvas, 198 x 107 cm. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston. © Adrian Stimson. **[14]** Adrian Stimson, *Corporal Percy Beddard 2010*, 2011–12, oil on canvas, 198 x 107 cm. Collection of the artist. Courtesy of the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston. © Adrian Stimson.