

community voices

● CANADIAN REMEMBRANCE TORCH

Canadian Remembrance Torch challenges Saskatchewan to recognize contributions of veterans of Second World War

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Saskatchewan Proud! is a Canadian Remembrance Torch challenge that gives residents an opportunity to recognize WWII's 75th anniversaries, honour Canadian veterans, and show their pride.

The Challenge: 75 remembrance torch photos—each taken at one of the thousands of lakes named after Saskatchewan's WWII veterans.

Deadline: Saskatchewan Day

All of WWII's 75th anniversaries in May were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The upcoming August 15th anniversary—of the end of the Second World War—will be limited, at best. Remembrance Day will likely be restricted. Saskatchewan Day is a great time to showcase provincial pride and show that its residents care.

It's easy to participate. Create your personal remembrance torch (<https://canadianremembrancetorch.ca/the-torch-be-yours/>), go to your special location, hold it high, and remember our veterans' legacy of peace, freedom, and friendship.

Photos of "holding it high moments" will be shared on social media such as

Facebook, Twitter, and The Canadian Remembrance Torch's website and become part of a special Remembrance Week tribute in November.

About the torch

The Canadian Remembrance Torch began as a "rallying cry," as an imaginary torch beckoning the descendants of Canadian WWII veterans to come together to honour their fathers and show that they would never forget.

"Inspired by her veteran father's wartime memoir and a desire to know more about his WWII experience, Karen Hunter had organized a not-for-profit pilgrimage to the Netherlands for the descendants of Canadian WWII veterans who had served there.

Scheduled for May 2020, In Our Fathers' Footsteps (IOFF) was intended to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Dutch liberation. Participants would walk 60 kms in the footsteps of the Canadian troops, participate in heartfelt commemorations along the way, and party with the locals at liberation festivals. In Apeldoorn, they would be greeted by Princess Margriet at Het Loo Palace.

"As the next generation, it's up to us

to carry the torch of remembrance!" IOFF's rallying cry attracted hundreds of participants from across Canada. Together with significant media attention, the event quickly sold out, with a large wait list.

By January 2020, the plan to "carry the torch of remembrance" had taken on a life of its own. The vision of an imaginary torch had become the need for a real one: The Canadian Remembrance Torch. But, not just any torch would do. It needed to be an Olympic-calibre torch, worthy of its purpose. And, so the search began.

Many Canadian companies helped. Bombardier (Vancouver Olympic Torch), the National Research Council (Calgary Olympic Torch), The Canadian Olympic Committee, and theatre torch companies. A crowd-funding campaign was launched. But, as the weeks passed, it became clear. There wasn't enough time. The Torch needed a new plan.

Knowing that the Olympic flame travels in a special lamp, two were obtained (one as back-up) from Scotland. Then, with help from the Canadian military, a very special air/sea/land journey began to take shape for The Canadian Remembrance Torch/Lamp.

The "Torch" would be lit at the Centennial Flame (near the Peace Tower in Ottawa), flown by Air Force plane to Halifax, sail by "Navy" ship to the Netherlands, then be carried by the Army to the start of IOFF's 60 km walk. At Het Loo Palace, a veteran would pass the "Torch" to Princess Margriet who would pass it to a young Canadian. Following a simulcast with veterans at "The Man with Two Hats" statues (in Apeldoorn and Ottawa), the "Torch" would return to Canada for Veteran Affairs' end of WWII ceremonies.

Then, the virus changed everything.

By February 2020, the "Torch" could no longer travel by ship. Air Canada stepped up and offered to be the "Torch's" official carrier, but, by mid-March, those plans were off, too. In Our Fathers' Footsteps and the "Torch's" 2020 journey were both cancelled.

The Torch; be yours! and other remembrance events continue to help keep the spirit of The Canadian Remembrance Torch alive, a spirit that now includes remembrance of all Canadian veterans.

With your support, we'll soon carry a real torch, a special torch – The Canadian Remembrance Torch – to show: We will never forget.