

Thomas Littlewood**PhD Final Oral Examination****Title - Public Commemoration and Personal Memories: Canadian
Commemorations of the Second World War****ABSTRACT**

This dissertation examines the many ways that the Second World War was remembered by Canadians from 1945 to the end of the twentieth century. Although a collective memory of the Second World War draws on commemorative forms from the First World War, the commemorative traditions of the Second evolved considerably with the rise of 'modern' Canada. Efforts to build a national war memorial to the Second World War in Ottawa were unsuccessful, prompting a wide range of commemorative efforts at the local level. This dissertation engages with changing notions of Canadian faith, identity, and foreign policy to consider how Canadians have included (and excluded) different visions of the 'veteran' in their commemorative practices. Remembrance Day ceremonies remained an important way that Canadians remembered war, but questions of who organized the ceremonies, their structure, and who was included also reflected shifting understandings of modern Canada. This dissertation also shows that, despite the increase of utilitarian places of memory after 1945, Canadians also drew upon many traditional forms of remembrance that resembled and echoed those from the post-1918 era. Controversies in the 1990s about how the memory of the role of the air force in Bomber Command was being depicted by publicly-funded institutions, on the other hand, spoke to the contested nature of commemoration and the narratives that veterans wanted to defend and promote about this aspect of Canada's (and Canadians') involvement in the Second World War.

Commemoration of the Second World War has been important for many Canadians for reasons that have shifted and changed over time. Since the end of that war, Canadians have largely prioritized local community-based memories and personal stories over national narratives and large-scale commemoration. These commemorative activities, whether physical, built memorials of various forms, or annual rituals such as Remembrance Day ceremonies, have been used by Canadians as ways to articulate contemporary values and concerns, and to suggest a vision for the future. Commemorative events and monuments are brokers between the past, present, and future, and studying them allows for an understanding of changes in Canadian culture and society as well as Canadians' relationship to their country's history and past.

Date: June 26, 2024**Time: 10:00am – 12:30pm****Location: hybrid**

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