

JULY 2 2014 NEWS RELEASE

Library, museum announce First World War project

Two of the Nicola Valley's memory-keepers invite valley residents to join them in organizing a multi-year observance of the centenary of the First World War.

"Our intention is to remember all those in the Valley who endured the First World War, those who went to war and those who awaited their return, and, of course, those who died in battle and those who grieved them," says Deborha Merrick, head of the Merritt branch of TNRD Library System.

Deborha is working with Michael Sasges of the Nicola Valley Museum & Archives. They are especially keen to hear from the valley's artists, crafts people and writers, as well as the valley's younger residents.

Deborha and Mike hope all who come forward are as keen as they are to acknowledge and commemorate the social personality of the residents of the Nicola Valley in the first two decades of the previous century.

"They were a gregarious people, garrulous, too, I suspect, and the record of their dances and smokers and concerts and lectures and ball games and football matches delights a century later," Mike says.

"Yes, their nights were long, but figuratively and seasonally only. Sure, they had no radio, television or Internet to keep them home, but they kept each other's company well."

Centenary projects are endless and might include: a study group to generate biographies of the Valley's war dead; concerts by Valley musicians and singers, the music and songs of the church halls and dance halls and labour halls of the era; exhibitions by painters that re-imagine the famous battlefield paintings of the First World War, or a memorial quilt.

The bloodiest conflict in Canadian history took the lives of at least 40 of the 335 Valley men who went to war between the summer of 1914 and the fall of 1918.

For more information, and archival photos, please contact:

Deborha Merrick, 250-378-4737

Mike Sasges, 250-378-6982, and Mike has the photos

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Editors and news directors: A recent British Columbia Museum Association gathering, "B.C. Remembers the First World War 2014 – 2018," generated much information on the Great War centenary intentions of members large and small, and their challenges. Please visit:

museumsassn.bc.ca/professional-development/upcoming-events/bc-remembers-first-world-war-victoria-online/resources/