



NEWS RELEASE

Prime Minister Harper attends special Dominion Institute event in support of Canadian veterans

Institute's Memory Project reaches 175,000 young Canadians annually

December 15, 2008 – Prime Minister Harper joined veterans, Canadian Forces soldiers and young Canadians today at an elementary school in Saint John to celebrate the holidays as part of the Dominion Institute's national Memory Project initiative.

More than 100 grade five students filled the gymnasium at Forest Hills School today to ask veterans about their experiences overseas during the holidays and shared with the Prime Minister and our military heroes what they are thankful for just before Christmas.

"The reason we live in a free, democratic and peaceful country today is because of the courage and sacrifices of all those who have served in the Canadian Forces," said Prime Minister Harper. "The Memory Project helps ensure that Canada's proud history is passed along from those who have lived it to the next generation of Canadians who will defend it."

"In just a few years, The Memory Project has become a national institution that engages more than 175,000 students each year with the unique stories of our veterans' service and sacrifice," said Marc Chalifoux, Executive Director of the Dominion Institute. "We are thrilled that the Prime Minister was able to meet with the students and veterans here today and hope it will inspire young people to better appreciate the contribution veterans have made to Canada."

Saint John veteran Frank Rusling shared his unique experiences about his time in the Royal Navy during the Second World War, and specifically how he spent his Christmases away from his family, while at sea. Richard Cornell, an Army veteran from the Second World War shared his story of being hailed a hero following the liberation of a French town in 1945. The event also featured a message of holiday greetings from CF soldiers stationed in Khandahar, Afghanistan and a special presentation made by the Grade 5 students to the Prime Minister and veterans.

The Memory Project is supported by the Government of Canada through Veterans Affairs Canada's Community Engagement Partnership Fund and through the Canadian Studies Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The Memory Project is the Dominion Institute's flagship programme which connects veterans and students online and in classrooms across the country. Since 2001, The Memory Project has:

- Involved more than 1,500 veteran volunteers
- Reached more than 750,000 students across Canada
- Become the official speakers' bureau of the Royal Canadian Legion
- Launched a Digital Archive to capture the images and stories of more than 1000 living veterans in Canada.

The Dominion Institute was founded in 1997 and has focused its efforts on conducting original research into Canadians' knowledge of the country's past and building innovative programs - such as The Memory Project - that broaden appreciation of the richness and complexity of the Canadian story. Visit www.dominion.ca for more information.



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Marc Chalifoux
Executive Director
416.602.9721 (cell), marc@dominion.ca