

Warrior Myths and National Memory: The Legacy of Canada's Cavalry

Curriculum Connections

Aligned with Alberta Social Studies 10–12 outcomes:

Grade Level	Outcome	Connection to Assignment
Grade 10 Social Studies	1.4	Examine how identity and military legacy are expressed through visual and material culture.
Grade 11 Social Studies	2.7	Analyze nationalism and conflict as portrayed in cavalry narratives and commemorative art.
Grade 12 Social Studies	1.3 / 4.5	Explore how ideology and symbols shape public memory and heroic myth-making.



Figure 1. ALFRED MUNNINGS, FORT GARRYS ON THE MARCH, 1918, OIL ON CANVAS. BEAVERBROOK COLLECTION OF WAR ART, CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM, OTTAWA.

Essential Inquiry Question

How do paintings and personal artifacts shape our national memory of war, and what is the impact of remembering war through heroic cavalry narratives?

Learning Objectives

- Analyze how cavalry imagery and colonial legacies shaped national identity during WWI
- Evaluate how symbols (e.g., uniforms, horses, artifacts) promote nationalism and heroic myths
- Interpret war art and artifacts as sources of historical memory and ideological influence
- Develop persuasive writing skills rooted in historical inquiry and source evaluation

Social Studies 20/30: Position Essay Requirements

Write a 900–1200 word essay exploring how Alfred Munnings' paintings and accompanying artifacts (e.g., Vaillancourt's badge, Willoughby's remains) shape Canadian identity and war memory.

Your essay must include:

- Visual analysis of at least one painting (e.g., *Charge of Flowerdew's Squadron* [1918])
- Interpretation of one artifact (e.g., Vaillancourt's farrier badge or photo)
- Integration of at least one secondary source (museum article, war history resource)
- Argument: Do heroic cavalry narratives enhance or distort Canadian WWI memory?

Suggested Sources

- Library & Archives Canada – [WWI diaries and war art materials](#)
- National Army Museum – [Feature on Alfred Munnings](#)
- [The Canadian Letters and Images Project](#)
- Willoughby and Vaillancourt artifact materials (badge, ID disc, photograph)

Rubrics

Social Studies 20/30 Rubric (Position Essay)

Curricular Outcome & Criteria	Exemplary	Proficient	Developing	Beginning
2.7 – Analyze nationalism and conflict	Provides a nuanced, critical analysis of how nationalism and colonial legacies shape heroic cavalry narratives.	Clearly explains the connections between nationalism, identity, and war memory.	Identifies basic links between nationalism and representation.	Shows minimal understanding of nationalism or its connection to memory.
4.1 / 4.2 – Evaluate historical perspectives and narratives	Effectively critiques traditional and alternative narratives using evidence from art and artifacts.	Explores differing historical perspectives, accompanied by some supporting details.	Mentions multiple perspectives with limited evidence.	Shows little awareness of historical narrative diversity.
1.3 – Ideology and collective memory	Insightfully explains how ideological values shape national remembrance through symbols and commemoration.	Explains how ideology influences memory and visual representation.	Touches on ideological influence with a basic understanding.	Shows limited or unclear connection to ideology and memory.
4.5 – Use of symbols in identity construction	Thoroughly analyzes how visual and material symbols communicate national identity and values.	Explains symbolic representation with clarity.	Identifies some symbols without deeper analysis.	Minimal or no reference to symbolic meaning.