

Instructions for Engagement activity 4: Wars, Slavery and Digital Humanities

31 May – 6 June

Introduction and goals: You will engage with primary evidence to investigate the lives of the Black soldiers who enrolled in the Canadian Army's Second Construction Battalion, and who were either born in the British West Indies (BWI) or had a next of kin born in the West Indies. You are the first people to help populate this new database. The exercise invites you to explore one soldier "service file" and to reflect on the links between his attachment to family members in the British West Indies, to a community on Canada and to his service in Europe. to contribute to a larger crowd sourcing project that will help everyone understand the history of these soldiers. This activity is a collaboration with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) and an initiative called Project 'True' North (PTN) where high school history students are researching the lives of Canadian soldiers and nurses in the First World War. The result of your investigation will be posted on the website common to these courses: Recipro. For an example of a former collaboration, this time on war Nurses, see [HERE](#). You will become more familiar with:

- the history of First World War, the history of Black Canadian diasporas, and their link with the history of slavery in the British Empire;
- the main tools for historical research, and the skills use them well
- skills to solve historical problems including the analysis and interpretation of historical documents, and the ability to make distinctions in the face of complex questions

Time: 5 hours (excludes the time for the Preparatory readings)

Mark: 6 %

Rubric: You will be marked according to:

- How carefully you follow all instructions, especially given the attention needed to enter the materials on the portal in the report
- The quality of your reflection on these materials, including the level of engagement with the textbook, supplementary reading, and supplementary archives (precise reference, imaginative links)

Due dates:

- First post: Friday 3 May at 11:59 pm
- Second post: Monday 6 May at 11:59 pm

Preparations: Before writing the second post, you should have read:

- Chapter 6 of the textbook, "The War Years, 1914–45"
- Ruck, Lindsay. "[No. 2 Construction Battalion](#)." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Historica Canada. Article published May 17, 2016; Last Edited December 20, 2021.

Work:

I. First post: Explore the service file and fill a "Field Inventory" (3 hours)

1. Go to the TABLE entitled **BWI SOLDIERS**:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1IYLVvgrQAcJ_QDgqy1py08gU44seER1274xYISGR4Aw/edit?invite=CL2Us9AD#gid=0
 - Find the soldiers assigned to you (see below **Appendix 1: Find the soldiers you will research**)

- Open the link to your soldier's service file by clicking on his name
2. Download or print off a copy of the '[Great War Soldier Fields' document](#) and fill it in as you work through the service file: this is a draft of your "Field Inventory". Work your way through the many documents of the "Service File". Do your best with the difficult handwriting. Do not worry when it is too hard to understand, carry on and stop on what you can make sense of. For this course, we will pay a special attention to this kind of information:
 - where the soldier was born
 - the identity and location of family members
 - the places the soldier went to during the war
 - the places the soldier went to after the war
 3. Enter the **Black Soldier Data Entry Portal** is: <https://lest-we-forget.ca/Black/>
 - Enter the Access code for our class: DM1
 - NOTE: It is very important that you be very accurate when entering information on this page. Most errors arise when students do not use the same information from one login to the next, which creates different unique soldier identifiers in the database (it looks as though all information is lost).
 - Enter the first name(s) of your soldier ("Christian name"), and their last name ("Surname")
 - Have a look at the 7 different tabs in the portal, to give you an idea of how this works.
 - NOTE: Anything you enter there is saved automatically. Even after you press "submit" in the last tab, you can return to the portal and change things.
 - As you work, make use of the "Have a question" buttons. Depending on the issue:
 - **Ask a Historian** - we have a network of experts that we can tap into, and you can expect a response in a day or two.
 - **Bug Report** - if there is an issue with website/portal you can file a report, and these are handled much more quickly depending on the size of the bug
 - At the top right of the screen, you will also see a place where you can search the abbreviations used by those who filled the various forms.
 4. Enter your **Field Inventory** in the Database and post it on Brightspace
 - Go to the window of the last tab on the left of the portal called "**Submit**". Fill what you can in this page (including the permission (or not) to use your name) and click the button "**Update Soldier**".
 - This will generate a new page thanking you for your submission, reassuring you that you still can submit other information, and inviting you to "**Click Here to Access Field Inventory**".
 - Push the button "**Click Here to Access Field Inventory**": this will produce a table with all the information you entered.
 - Copy the information and paste it in a **new Word document**. Save the document using the following format for the **title** [Last name of soldier]HIST1302A (for example: Rogers_HIST1302A_)
 - Open Open the Forum in Brightspace.
 - Click the button *Start a new thread* to add your post.
 - The **title of your thread** should start by your last name
 - Attach the **Field Inventory**

II. Second Post: Prepare a report on your soldier (2 hours)

1. Explore related archives (1.5 hours)
 - Find the places on a map

- Try to find information about the family on some of the databases on plantations in the British Isles?
 - National Archives UK
 - National Archives USA
 - Individual Plantations Archives
 - NOTE: we will provide links to good records later during the week.
- 2. Select the best image from the archives & reference
 - **Select a part of a document** in the archives you consulted that best evoke what you find interesting about the soldier you researched. This should be a square of any size, but it should be legible when reduced to a square box of 3 cm/3 cm
 - Make a **screen shot**, copy and paste it in a new Word document. Save the document using the following format: Rogers_HIST1302A_Marshall2022A_Image
 - **Write the reference** to the document in Chicago Style under the image, using the same technique you used in Engagement Activity 3 on museum objects
- 3. Write a mini biography
 - **Write one paragraphs** of approximately 150 - 200 words that describes best this soldiers' experience as you have understood it from your investigation. In your text, make meaningful links with the following documents, and indicate the reference in a parenthesis in the text:
 - the specific archival documents (for example: Discharge Certificate),
 - relevant information in the textbook (for example: Belshaw, 8.3)
 - the Canadian Encyclopedia (for example: Lindsay, CE),
 - and the plantation archives or any other database you consulted (for instance NA, Fonds xxx, file xxx)
 - Insert the paragraph under the image and the reference, in the same Word document
 - Tell us if you accept that your work be posted on a public website by copying and pasting one of the three following sentences:
 - I accept that my work will be posted on the public website Recipro, anonymously
 - I accept that my work will be posted on the public website Recipro, with my name attached
 - I do not want my work to be posted publicly
- 4. Submit Go back to your thread on Brightspace.
 - **Attach the document** containing the image and its reference, as well as the mini biography
 - Optional: you may have a look at the submissions of the members of your group and use the forum to comment on them. This won't be marked by the Teaching Assistants, but it should be interesting.

III. What happens next

The goal of this final part of your work is to use the material harvested by the class to create a virtual gallery of as many as possible of the 69 soldiers. The gallery will be displayed on [Recipro](#)*, the public teaching platform a team of colleagues and I started last year, on the theme of humanitarian aid and international solidarity. Your gallery will exist under a new tab entitled "Canadian Black Caribbean Soldiers", located under the existing tab "Black Canadian Soldiers", within the "Transnational Labour Solidarity" section on the website:



About us

Transnational Labour Solidarity

The World of INGOs

A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT
uOttawa AND Carleton



Cold War in Africa

The Spanish Civil War

Black Canadian soldiers

Transnational La

This exhibit explores the history of transnational labour solidai

The first page will be a virtual gallery of images, one for soldier, with the name of the soldier superimposed. When clicking on the image, visitors will the paragraphs written by our class as well as the Field Reports.

Your front tiles, and the page behind each, will serve as anchors for projects of the students of other classes. [I-CUREUS](#) Undergraduate Research Assistant Kegan Rumig will place your projects soon after your work is completed. By this, we hope to support a true asynchronous interclass collaboration.

Appendix 1: Find the soldiers you will research

The number at the left of your name is the number of the soldier on the Google sheet entitled "BW1"

58	Abi Zaher, Nizar	16	Gill, Jesmeen	31	Kola, Fotini
2	Alakorpi, Ari	17	Grad, Carter	32	Korim, Kelly
3	Aston, Mya	18	Gull, Terrilyn	33	Lacey, Cassandra
4	Barberis, Stamatios	19	Haji-Dodi, Mohamed	34	Li, Lisa
5	Baxendale, Alexander	20	Hale, Brendan	35	Maddison, Berit
6	Bosik, Tait	21	Harlan, Nathan	36	Magee, Ailis
7	Bruggeling, Keaton	22	Hughes, Pierce	37	Malik, Shaan
8	Caracciolo, Juliana	23	Hutt, Rebecca	38	Mannix, Grace
9	Choy, Lauren	24	Julien, Reanna	39	Manoilescu, Laura
10	Clark, Mack	25	Kanji, Surayya	40	McEachren, Cassandra
11	Doherty, Amy	26	Katyal, Vikhyat	41	Mcevoy, Dylan
12	Ellis, Katherine	27	Kaye, Darian	42	Murphy, Elle
13	Farkas, Julianna	28	Kazak, Rayhan	43	Northwood, Taylor
14	Fleming, Zoe	29	Kennedy, Kealey	44	Palmer, Michelle
15	Furlano, Sabrina	30	Khan, Samin		

45 Rahmati Aghjeh,
Alireza
46 Ramirez-Liberato, Luis
47 Shadad, Mariam
48 Stark, Haley

49 Stothers, Evan
50 Street, Cassidy
51 Swettenham, Anya
52 Taylor, Logan
53 Vargas, Albert

54 Wilson, Jade
55 Xia, Tian
56 Young, Owen
57 Zeng, Anne