

Mobilizing the Forces

Britain declared war on August 4, 1914 – Canada was automatically at war

War - Sign me up!

- P.M. Borden offered 25 000 troops – the 1st Division of the Canadian Expeditionary Force
- first few months - Canadians volunteered (trained at Valcartier, Quebec)
- first 10 months – 100 000 volunteers

Why?

- expected to be a short war
- British General - “Home before Christmas”
- German General - “Home before the leaves fall off the trees”
- overseas adventure
- chance to be a hero
- the pay - unemployment and poverty were severe problems in 1914
- patriotism (loyalty to one’s country) - ½ the population was of British origin

Who else enlisted?

Native Canadians

- held the record
- 30% of eligible men enlisted, twice as many as the general population; over 4000 Native and Métis
- Tom Longboat (held the record for the Boston Marathon) was made a messenger runner
- Francis “Peg” Pegamegabow - most decorated native soldier in WWI

Japanese-Canadians

- faced much prejudice in BC; many went to Alberta to enlist

African-Canadians

- were barred from joining the forces, but they kept pressing until they were allowed to form a construction battalion (1000 men)
- Jeremiah Jones - 56 year old private with the RCR; awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (2nd highest medal for bravery)
- Discrimination stopped many of these brave/decorated men from becoming officers.

Who did not enlist?

- *Pacifists* (people who believed countries should seek non-violent solutions to their problems)
- women's groups (saw war as wasteful and destructive)
- religious groups - Quakers, Mennonites, Hutterites