



For immediate release

Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund lends support to investigations into residential schools with Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) unit

Winnipeg, July 15, 2021 – The Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund (CFWWIRF) joins Indigenous communities and all Canadians in mourning the loss of thousands of innocent children at Canada’s residential schools.

In support of the continued investigations into these deaths, CFWWIRF is pleased to have provided its Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) unit to assist in locating potential unmarked burials at two Indian Residential School (IRS) sites in British Columbia. The Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc Nation requested that Dr. Sarah Beaulieu of the University of Fraser Valley use GPR to assist in locating potential unmarked graves near the Kamloops Residential School. Dr. Beaulieu has also surveyed an additional IRS site but due to confidentiality is unable to disclose that location.

Dr. Beaulieu has been instrumental in furthering the work of the CFWWIRF using GPR to locate unmarked graves at the Morrissey Internee cemetery near Fernie, British Columbia. She will also be using GPR to locate artefacts at the Monashee internment camp located near Cherryville, British Columbia this summer. Thousands of innocent Ukrainians and other Europeans were unjustly interned in 24 internment camps during Canada’s first national internment operations of 1914 to 1920. 125 men and children died while incarcerated and were buried in 33 cemeteries across Canada. With a mandate to restore these grave sites and cemeteries, the CFWWIRF understands the importance of respectfully honoring those who died needlessly and the urgency of locating those who are buried in unmarked graves.

During the internment operations of 1914 to 1920 in Canada, 8,579 people were branded as “enemy aliens” and interned. Among them were Ukrainians, Alevi Kurds, Armenians, Bulgarians, Croatians, Czechs, Germans, Hungarians, Italians, Jews, Ottoman Turks, Poles, Romanians, Russians, Serbs, Slovaks and Slovenes, of which most were Ukrainian and civilians. Stripped of what little wealth they had, many were imprisoned and forced into heavy labour in

Canada's hinterlands. They were disenfranchised and subjected to other state-sanctioned censures only because of their origin.

"The shameful history of the First Nations Residential Schools reminds us of the tragic consequences of civil and human rights violations, and of the need to continually raise awareness and protect our fundamental principles," stated Borys Sirskyj, Chair of the Endowment Council of the Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund (EC CFWWIRF). "We will continue to respectfully honour the memories of the children who have been forever lost to their families and community in the hope that their stories will inspire a better Canadian future."

About CFWWIRF

The Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund was established in 2008 within the Ukrainian Canadian Foundation of Taras Shevchenko to support commemorative, educational, scholarly and cultural projects that commemorate and recognize the experiences of all the ethnocultural communities affected by Canada's first national internment operations of 1914 to 1920. Since its inception, over \$4 million in grants have been awarded in an effort to shed light on this tragic yet little-known chapter in Canadian history.

For more information on the Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund contact the Program Manager, Andrea Malysh, at malysh@internmentcanada.ca or toll free at 1-866-288-7931.

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