

Sir Arthur Currie

Commander of the Canadian Corps, WWI

Born December 5, 1875 in Napperton, ON and attending Strathroy Collegiate Institute (S.C.I.) at age 14, Arthur Currie knew the Strathroy-Caradoc area well. He enjoyed literature and debating but when his father died, Arthur was just 16 and could not afford university. Arthur attended Model School to become a teacher, but could not find a job. In April of 1894, at age 19 he left Strathroy and headed west to Victoria, British Columbia, joining the militia in 1897.

Enlisting at the lowest rank of gunner in the 5th (B.C.) Regiment, Canadian Garrison Artillery, Currie became a dedicated soldier and rose rapidly through the ranks. At the outbreak of war in 1914, Canadian Minister of Militia and Defence Sam Hughes offered Currie command of an infantry brigade being formed at Valcartier, Quebec. He accepted command of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and focused on training his soldiers for war. Leading troops through iconic battles such as Vimy, Passchendaele and Mons, Currie believed that “the price of victory should be paid in shells and not lives.”



PHOTO: Sir Arthur Currie, Christmas 1917. Museum Strathroy-Caradoc.

Sir Arthur Currie was an ordinary man who accomplished extraordinary things. From the fields of his southwestern Ontario homestead, to the front lines of the Great War, Sir Arthur Currie rose from farm boy to commander of the Canadian Expeditionary Force — the first Canadian to lead Canadians in war. Currie’s childhood and education played a part in shaping his character, his commitment to preparation and planning, and the humbleness with which he served making him a HOMETOWN HERO.

Coming from a family with no connection to the military, Currie became a soldier of great prominence. Currie returned to Strathroy after the war for homecoming celebrations in September 1919 and visited the area numerous times until his death in 1933 in Montreal. Currie is honoured through commemorative efforts across the country, including local recognition at Strathroy District Collegiate Institute, the Legion Branch (116), and the civic centre monument on Frank Street. Currie is also memorialized as one of fourteen Canadian heroes sculpted in bronze at the Valliants Memorial in Ottawa.



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GENERAL SIR ARTHUR
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PHOTO: General Sir Arthur Currie at Strathroy Armoury, 1919. Museum Strathroy Caradoc.