

# 1939 First Responders

## **First Responders Virginia War Memorial Canadian Connections**

World War II unfolded in 1939 when Hitler ordered his army to invade Poland, the first step towards the occupation of Europe. In the beginning the US hesitated in getting involved, with the exception of providing the material to the British forces.



It is well known that the trigger for US involvement was the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese who had become an ally of Hitler.

However, very shortly following the German bombing of England and before Pearl Harbor, a significant number of America's young men went North to join the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and train for combat service in the British Royal Air Force (RAF) based in England, the majority serving in RCAF and RAF Bomber squadrons.

The combined effort of these First Responders to the United States was a total of over 8,000 RCAF airmen. Their combined casualties from the 48 states were (830) killed-in-action, with (16) of these aircrew from Virginia.

Not until October 22, 2013, has any state ever given recognition to these young Americans. On the above date a memorial plaque was unveiled at the Virginia War Memorial showing the names of the 16 airmen who sacrificed their lives for their countrymen, in the service of the RCAF.

We have just learned that the state of Florida is following the state of Virginia in memorializing their young volunteers of Florida who joined the Royal Canadian Air Force and were killed-in-action.



At the present time an effort has begun to produce a video documentary of the Virginia War Memorial service and finally tell the unknown story of these "RCAF Americans." A Canadian film company has preserved every element and moment of that event on October 22, 2013 and they will be able to reproduce all facets of it including a beautiful anthem that was composed in tribute for this special unveiling.

We welcome contributions made for this memorial video documentary and are seeking \$25,000 in contributions toward its production. Checks may be made payable to the Virginia War Memorial noting First Canadian Responders in the memo section. Contributions can also be made at the website Go Fund Me:  
<http://www.gofundme.com/p1eb78>

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