

of need. And so it was at the outbreak of World War I when Canada offered its strength of 3,000 regular soldiers, including the recently formed contingent of cavalry, Lord Strathcona's Horse (The Royal Canadians), backed by 60,000 part-time reservists, and its embryonic navy, formed in 1910, which then consisted of two cruisers. While there was a Royal Canadian Air Force, it had to be built up from a single Burgess-Dunne bi-plane.

By 1918 however, its contribution to the allied war effort was such that Canada signed the peace treaty as a full and equal member of the alliance. In all more than 600,000 Canadians served, and almost 60,000 of them were killed and 172,950 wounded.

Field Marshal Sir John French described their contribution to the battle of Ypres with the words, 'the bearing and conduct of these splendid troops averted a disaster.'

There were Canadians in the air also. Perhaps the most famous of them was the heavily decorated Billy Bishop, VC, DSO, DFC, MC who shot down more German aircraft than any other Allied airman, and who went on to become Air Marshal of the RCAF during the Second World War. His legend lives on, and a Vancouver musical drama about him, 'Billy Bishop goes to War' opened in London's West End in June after two sell-out years on Broadway.



*Labrador Helicopter by Barbara Green 1971. (Watercolour)*

Canada, like many other nations was convinced that World War I would be the 'war to end all wars'. During the interlude between the two great wars Canadians dreamed of an everlasting peace and military matters were relegated to the lowest priority in almost everyone's mind.

The year 1939 brutally shattered such dreams, and Canada's farmers and their sons once again picked up their rifles, its loggers exchanged their saws for the controls of aircraft and its office and factory workers manned the ships that once again filed out of Halifax harbour to take up patrols on the North Atlantic,



*HMCS Margaree, Athabaskan and Ottawa on exercise in the Baltic Sea. (Photo M/CPL R Rodger)*